

**Dis/Locating Gendered Readings:
Moving Towards a Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement**

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Claire Hiller". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Claire" and the last name "Hiller" clearly distinguishable.

Claire Hiller

Authority of Access

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Ethical Clearance

Ethical clearance was gained from the University of Tasmania. The school, the teachers and the students are anonymous.

Abstract

This thesis 'Dis/Locating Gendered Readings: Moving Towards a Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement' investigates the interaction of students, teachers and narrative texts in a Grade 9 English classroom and explores processes of gendered subject production through pedagogical practices. The main focus is student and teacher responses to three narrative texts *Peter* (Walker, 1991), *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992) and *Dougy* (Moloney, 1993) and resulting gendered differences in discursive positioning. The main aim is to identify the dominant discourses of both students and teachers with the view to interrogating them for the implications for current literary pedagogy and gendered positioning.

The research is ethnographic focusing in particular on the discourses taken up by students and teachers in response to narrative texts. Drawing on a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives – pedagogy, feminist theory and discourse analysis – this thesis argues that classrooms are sites of multiple and competing discourses: the discourses already available to the students, the pedagogical discourses of the teachers, and the discursive positionings made available by narrative texts used as part of the pedagogy.

The dominant discursive positions available to students are identified using a grounded theory approach and elaborated through discourse analysis of classroom transcripts of talk. The pedagogical discourses used by the teachers are also identified and analysed in consultation with the teachers involved as part of the emancipatory intention. This thesis offers a critical discussion of these dominant pedagogical discourses in relation to reading and textual analysis with the view to elaborating an alternative pedagogy which offers a more productive field for feminist classroom textual practices.

The discourses taken up by the students situate them in different ways which reflect wider discursive positionings, both within the classroom discussion of narrative texts and more widely. This thesis investigates the consequences of the differences produced by current pedagogical practices and the potential for pedagogical change. It argues that current pedagogies of literary teaching reproduce binary structuring of gendered subjectivities, which situate students differently and unequally. It moves towards the elaboration of an emancipatory pedagogy which makes transparent essentialist categories and opens emancipatory spaces for both teachers and students.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Gender, Pedagogy and Narrative Texts

Introduction

- Teacher What if it's your brother or sister who was gay?
- Girl 1 It wouldn't be a problem. It would be exactly the same person that you had grown up with. They would only not have a wife or husband only in the other way. Would you care?
- Boy 1 At first you might be a bit worried but after a while it would not matter.
- Boy 2 I would beat him up but he's a bit big. I would like to beat him up.
- Boy 3 Yes, I would beat him up and if it made no difference I would beat him up again.
- Teacher So you think violence is a way of solving the problem?
- Boy 3 Yes.

This text is part of a transcript collected in a Secondary English classroom when teacher and students were in the process of reading the narrative text, *Peter* (Walker, 1991). In terms of pedagogy and student response this extract from the transcript demonstrates the central concerns of this thesis which seeks to explore the role of pedagogy in providing discursive spaces for students in response to narrative texts in one English classroom. This brief extract is a textual record of an exchange between teacher and students, a complex exchange which can be read in a number of ways. It is a moment of direct dialogue between teacher and students which is encouraging and supportive in terms of personal response. On the other hand there could be implied criticism of violence in the teacher's comment 'So you think violence is a way of solving the problem?' It can be read as gendered in that in three responses the boys support violence while the response of the girl suggests acceptance of homosexuality perhaps conflating difference into sameness. Yet the response of Boy 2 is more ambiguous and contradictory than the other two boys and more accepting of homosexuality. The extract shows the network of intersecting discourses in an English classroom within which students take up multiple and contradictory discourses and is thus a demonstration of the complex interrelation of discourse, pedagogy and subjectivity which are central concerns of this thesis.

1.1 Narrative

1.1.1 Narrative Texts and English Classrooms

Initially, this thesis set out to investigate in what ways culturally valued narrative or fictional texts, like the Australian prize-winning texts, *Peter* (Walker, 1991), *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992) and *Dougy* (Moloney, 1993), contribute to the construction of students' gendered subjectivities in English classrooms. The data collected and the readings of the data, suggested that this was too simplistic a formulation and led to a rethinking of the research questions in ways which focus on the complex interactions of students, texts and teachers' pedagogy in the production of gender in the classroom. In contemporary theory, the relationships between pedagogical practices, student responses and narrative texts has not been explored as extensively as other research on text and gender (Christian-Smith, 1991; Cranny-Francis, 1992; Davies, 1993, 1994; Eagleton, 1985; Gilbert, 1989; 1989b; Mellor & Patterson, 1991; Rogers Cherland, 1994; Walkerdine, 1990).

Narrative texts, whether construed as classic or popular cultural texts, are the dominant texts of the subject English in Australian secondary schools. They have a powerful and privileged position, which has largely remained unchallenged despite influences of Media Studies, Cultural Studies and Critical Pedagogy. Narrative texts, both print and visual, are widely accessed texts. Those narrative texts used in this thesis can be read in a number of different ways. They can be read as narratives which are mimesis or imitation, duplicates or copies of a reality which preceded them. While Derrida acknowledges mimesis, he questions it, 'Is not the most naive form of representation mimesis?' (Derrida, 1978:234). This kind of mimesis, according to Derrida, is frequently regarded with mistrust due to its derivativeness, first from the spoken word and then from what it symbolises (Derrida, 1981a). Narrative texts can also be read as constitutive, after Barthes, 'The function of narrative is not to 'represent', it is to constitute a spectacle still very enigmatic for us but in any case not of a mimetic order' (Barthes, 1977:123-4). Or narrative texts as mimesis can be read as a kind of conspiracy where the text pretends to be what it is not and the reader is deluded to read the text and the world as imitation of reality (Boyd, 1983:18). In a paper which endorses the role of narrative in the writing of history, White claims that the form of the historical text is indistinguishable from the literary as language and narrative are part of the systems of meaning production and are part of cultural understanding (White, 1980, 1984). Belsey suggests that narrative texts can be read as reassuring, not because they reflect reality but because they echo cultural conventions which are familiar to readers (Belsey, 1980).

In many narrative texts, the 'readerly texts' of Barthes (1974), versions of reality are constructed in an apparently seamless way to suggest that they are reflections of the real world and not constructed versions of it. They position the reader as a passive consumer and can be seen to reflect a 'real' world because they are constructed out of familiar discourses. Because of their familiarity they are

experienced as real (Belsey, 1980:51). Texts authored in a liberal humanist tradition construct a voice of authenticity which implies a guarantee of truth and a fixity of meaning (Weedon, 1997:162). The authorial voice of narrative has a legitimating function which informs other textual constructions including theories, ideologies and social and institutional practices (McLaren, 1995:91). The widespread and lasting appeal of great literature in a liberal humanist discourse is that it is seen to encode universal meanings and enable readers to understand the truth of what it is to be human (Weedon, 1997:139). Within the humanist tradition language is seen as transparent and subjectivity fixed. Particular kinds of narrative texts 'efface their own narrativity, their existence as discourse. Other narrative texts draw attention to their construction' (Belsey, 1980:51). The text whose construction is transparent is most used in English classrooms. How a narrative text is read in a classroom depends on the reading practices and assumptions students and teachers bring with them and importantly the pedagogical processes which are likely to produce particular and partial views of texts and support dominant cultural readings, including that of gender (Christian-Smith, 1991; Cranny-Francis, 1992; Davies, 1993, 1994; Eagleton, 1985; Gilbert, 1989, 1989b; Mellor & Patterson, 1991; Walkerdine, 1990).

Close textual readings have been an important part of the study of texts. Such reading practices have enabled feminists to analyse the production of gender in texts (Christian-Smith, 1991; Cranny-Francis, 1992; Gilbert, 1991, 1994, 1995; Moss, 1989; Walkerdine, 1984). Poststructuralist feminist theory has shifted the focus from readers to texts and examined how works of literature have been elevated to privileged positions by social ideologies and particular hegemonic practices (Williams, 1977; Davies, 1994; Eagleton, 1985; Gilbert, 1989, 1989b; Mellor & Patterson, 1991). Recently the work has been extended to include analyses of the subject positionings produced by texts and the network of practices within which texts are produced and consumed (Apple, 1989; Anstey & Bull, 1996; Baker & Luke, 1991; Baker & Freebody, 1980; Cranny-Francis, 1988, 1992, 1994; Luke, 1988, 1993; Muecke, 1992). Much of the work has not analysed closely the textual realisation of relations of gender and power. The teaching of English in Australian schools has been slow to incorporate close textual readings and critical literacy reading practices, which incorporate issues of gender and power into pedagogical practice. The reading of narrative texts is one of those everyday practices about which there are few accounts (Luke, 1994). Nor have the visible reading practices and the discourses produced by texts, teachers and students been given much attention. This thesis aims to remedy this omission.

1.2 An Overview of the Thesis

1.2.1 The Thesis Study

This thesis examines how texts and discourses of pedagogy construct literature learning in the school curriculum and how this construction is implicated in the production of students' gendered subjectivities. It interrogates discourse analyses

of narrative texts used in a classroom, with a focus on transcripts of classroom talk and interviews with teachers to investigate whether and in what ways discourses of gender are reproduced in English classrooms. The collected data also includes a journal kept by the researcher as part of the ethnographic approach used to inform the readings and the writing of the students in response to the narrative texts read and discussed.

The thesis is located within poststructuralist and feminist frameworks which acknowledge how language constructs both a representation of experience and a positioning of readers and writers in relations of power. The analysis of the discourses produced in the research suggests that uncritical reproduction of personal response discourses, which is the dominant pedagogy used in one English classroom, positions readers unequally to both texts and to social institutions and practices. Using poststructuralist and feminist understandings of language, representation, subjectivity and positioning, the thesis sees texts, including this one, as partial and open to multiple meanings, as representations of experiences rather than as truth and as always positioning readers in relations of power. Students are inscribed into the discourses of the dominant culture in which existing relations of power are naturalised. Not all students take up the discourses in the same way. The thesis recognises that,

subjectivity is constructed at the interface of discourses which may be contradictory, and in relationship to the forces of power present in a particular site and at a particular point in time (Wearing, 1996:37).

The research analysis shaped by both researcher and teachers suggests how pedagogy is shaped and can be reshaped differently to empower students and to change practices and the institutions of which they are a part.

This thesis is informed by critical pedagogy in the sense that its central aims are to encourage critical agency and critical social agency (Lankshear & Lawler, 1987). After De Laurentis (1987) it assumes that,

social and cultural constructions of femininity and masculinity intersect with subject formation, not in a deterministic manner, but in a series of moves between the two (Patterson, 1997:431).

Although the work of critical pedagogy has been criticised for its lack of gender awareness and its dominance by men (Lee, 1996:6), it has important implications for critiquing pedagogy and emphasising the importance of social agency. The emancipatory research of Lather makes connections between curriculum, critical

inquiry and empowerment (1991a:121) but it does not suggest ways of providing students with tools to both interrogate issues of gender and power in texts nor methods of critical resistance. Part of the project of this thesis is to suggest a pedagogy to do this.

This thesis seeks to develop a critical discourse that provides a theoretical basis for alternative approaches to literary pedagogy and social relations in classrooms. It defines the social agents, teachers and students, as multiple, contradictory and changing, discursively embedded in complex ways. Thus it problematises contemporary literary pedagogy and the discourses available to participants in the classroom. It aims to challenge experiences based on gendered binaries and to suggest new ways of establishing collective emancipatory pedagogies, which question individual student subjectivity within particular discursive contexts. The context of the classroom is seen as socially constructed, historically and culturally determined and maintained through dominant relations of gender, class, race and power. Classroom culture is seen to be ideological and not neutral. In this view, schooling is seen not to reflect dominant views but to constitute them.

This thesis recognises that students and teachers are variously positioned in classrooms and by texts in terms of gender but also in terms of social class, ethnicity, race, sexuality, and a range of other positions that place subjects differently. It examines how students are positioned and position themselves to texts in the classroom and the implications of such positionings for the construction of gendered subjectivities through textual practices in order to subvert one of the binaries which place girls and boys unequally in the classroom with the view to opening spaces for alternative subject positionings. While gender is the focus, it is not assumed that all girls and all boys experience gender and sexuality identically. Gender has been selected as a dominant binary opposition which operates in the classroom. This thesis explores how difference is produced 'within a common and connected space' (Fuller, 1997:9) acknowledging that difference is not given or natural. The intention is not to essentialise difference but to show how difference is produced and reproduced through discourse.

In the analysis of the dominant discourses of an English classroom the study seeks to problematise the constraints of those discourses for emancipatory purposes. It aims to both deconstruct and reconstruct pedagogical practices by examining how meaning is produced, what meanings are legitimised and how power works to legitimise dominant meanings. An examination of how students make meanings from narrative texts requires an analysis of how the discursive mediations of pedagogy and experience intersect to constitute powerfully determining aspects of human agency. The classroom is a site of conflicting discourses and struggles, a place where popular culture and discourses of individualism collide with discourses of liberal humanist elitist versions of response to literature. Classrooms, as sites of cultural reproduction, construct as well as constrain the

possibilities for social agency among students (Apple, 1993; Cherryholmes, 1988; Luke, 1988, 1993; McLaren, 1995).

Critical literacy theories, though diverse, have emerged from theories of critical pedagogy and literacy. Although literacy is not the direct concern of this thesis critical literacy and critical theory provide a framework for rethinking connections between discourse, language, subjectivity and power. Critical literacy is concerned with interrogating naturalised narratives which are privileged in English classrooms in Australia (Castell, Luke & Luke, 1989). It is recognised that discourses of critical literacy are provisional, a result of current debates in which language and literary theory and practice inform each other. Current ideals of critical literacy have emerged from two traditions (Luke & Walton, 1993). Conventional approaches are associated with critical social theory while more recent educational approaches are concerned with reader responses to literary texts. Critical social literacy variants include critical pedagogy approaches linked with the work of Freire (1976, 1990) and discourse analytic approaches (Gee, 1990). Critical literacy theoretical and pedagogical approaches have also been influenced by poststructural interpretations of texts and constructions of textuality and deconstructions of texts (Kress, 1995; McLaren, 1995). Critical literacy work has focused in the main on ideology critique and not on readers' readings of narrative texts. /

The encouragement of resistant or oppositional readings of texts, central to critical literacy approaches, has often precluded the provision of tools to critique the complex social processes which produce the dominant discourses of the classroom. This thesis attempts to add to critical literacy practices. It explores how texts position readers, examines how readings are multiple and not fixed, investigates how students and teachers take up positions through complex social interaction and examines the dominant discourses produced through interactions in the classroom.

1.3 Theoretical Location

1.3.1 Poststructuralist Theory and Gender Relations

The study is situated at the intersection of pedagogy, feminist theory and discourse analysis. It is self-consciously multi-disciplinary as it enters into collaboration with complex areas of contemporary scholarship. It is an examination of the teaching of narrative texts from within the framework of poststructuralist feminist theory in order to raise questions about social difference and power relations with specific reference to gender. Feminist theory allows for the problematisation of gender and gender relations. Poststructuralist theory provides ways for examining ideologies, the discourses which support them and the social practices which are a result. The study seeks a critical pedagogy, which provides, through a process of estrangement, as does McLaren's notion of a critical pedagogy of 'possibility' (1995:22), a truly liberatory, positive potential. Through an analysis of pedagogical

practices and discourses produced in an English classroom and the ways in which they position teachers and students, it is argued that spaces can be opened to contest and resist dominant readings.

The study of gender and literary pedagogy aims to gain a critical distance on existing gender relations in order to open spaces to re-evaluate and re-order those relations, not only in the classroom but in society as a whole. Feminist poststructuralist theory with its focus on ideology, discourse, language, power and subjectivity offers ways of exploring aspects of social relations that have been suppressed or unarticulated.

Poststructuralist feminist theory problematises current constructions of reality and subjectivity and the discourses through which they are articulated. Through such a cultural politics which engages with text, this thesis seeks to emphasise the need for emancipatory pedagogies and transformative practice (Jeans, 1997:10). It seeks to open spaces through a detailed examination of the discursive practices which operate in an English classroom for the empowerment of both students and teachers to take up a broader range of subject positions. It is concerned with the type of narrative text which invites closure, a movement in the plot from a disruption of a major or minor kind to a resolution in the form of the re-establishment of the existing order (Belsey, 1980:67).

This thesis engages theories of discourse and subjectivity from a poststructuralist perspective. While the work of Lankshear and Lawler (1987), drawing on Freire, focuses on pedagogy for critical social action, their work is more concerned with a literacy rather than a literary pedagogy. Purves' extensive study of literary response in terms of analysis of essays described a relationship between gender and pedagogy (Purves, 1981:79). Feminist work on text has focused on the gendering of literary texts and at gendered reading and writing practices in schools (Christian-Smith, 1993; Davies, 1989, 1993; Fuller, 1997; Gilbert, 1989b; Luke, 1989; Martino, 1994a, 1994b; Mellor & Patterson, 1991; Patterson, 1997). Most of this work has not examined issues of discursive production through pedagogical practices and narrative texts since it does not draw on theories of language which make available close analysis of discursive production. There is a significant body of important work in the area of language and gender from within linguistics (Cameron, 1985; Comber, 1997; Fuller & Lee, 1997; Kamler, 1997; Kramer, 1981; Kristeva, 1984; Lee, 1991, 1994, 1996; Threadgold, 1988; Patterson, 1997; Poynton, 1985, 1990) and work on response to romance texts by Willinsky and Hunniford (1986) and Christian-Smith (1993). In addition, there is work on gender difference in schooling (Thorne, 1990, 1993); on discursive production by Rogers Cherland (1994) through interviews with students; by Martino (1993, 1994a, 1994b, 1995) through the use of narrative texts, student writing and interviews; and by Sarland (1991) through student interviews and writing. Yet this work, does not draw together discursive production, pedagogical practices and the reading of narrative texts. This thesis makes a contribution to other feminist work in literary

studies by examining this dynamic. It aims to develop a theory of literary pedagogy in its engagement with discursive production in an English classroom.

1.3.2 Gender as Social Construction

Feminist poststructuralist theory, in terms of cultural politics, has problematised the relation of gender and power and demonstrated how language and discourses of gender support dominant discourses of society (Weedon, 1997). In this thesis gender is used in the sense that it is not a discrete category uninfluenced by sex and sexuality, but that there is a complex relationship between the social and the sexual in establishing gender subjectivity. This position is a socially constructed one which has been highly influenced by historical and cultural views of what it means to be male/masculine and female/feminine (Connell, 1987:66).

The 1990s are days of backlash 'the political power of the distinction between sex and gender has been largely made to disappear' (Oakley, 1997:52) and gender in the curriculum has been rendered almost invisible. A recent Australian report *Gender and School Education* (Collins, Batten, Ainley & Getty, 1996) which analysed the success of Australia's policy on the education of girls has revealed that very little progress has been made in the areas which were given special attention. One of its strong suggestions is that 'the big challenge for schools in relation to boys is to support them to dismantle the walls they construct around themselves and others in order to feel safely masculine' (Collins, Batten, Ainley & Getty, 1996:176) and that 'the alternative may be that many boys continue to redraw boundaries in ways that are constricting of their own development as well as restricting, hurtful and dangerous for other boys and girls' (Collins, Batten, Ainley & Getty, 1996:177). This suggests that it is just as important now to interrogate current and powerful discourses of gender in order to make visible how they limit opportunities for both girls and boys and to open spaces for the rewriting of the possibilities of gender.

This thesis argues that discourses of gender inform the subject positions that are available to students. It examines a view of the subject which sees the subject as produced through discourse. While it recognises that the subject is used in other contexts to mean either the human subject or the collective individual subject, in psychoanalysis (Freud, 1877, 1979, 1981; Lacan, 1979), linguistics (Saussure, 1974), philosophy (Derrida, 1973, 1976) and ideology (Althusser, 1971), as well as the subject as in subject disciplines, here it is taken to mean the subject as constituted through discourse. It sees that gender, as a dominant binary opposition, is discursively produced and is a complex social construction which is formed in the interaction of individuals with their social, cultural, historical and political contexts – in this case the classroom. The gendered subject is seen to have agency in the sense that subjectivity is not determined by cultural discourses of gender difference, but rather is capable of acting on its own behalf (Butler, 1990:147, Connell, 1995).

Agency of the subject is seen to be central to an emancipatory pedagogy. For Butler, gender is performance expressed through the repeated performances of words and actions which are coded as feminine (Butler, 1990:140). 'There is no possibility of agency or reality outside of the discursive practices that give those terms the intelligibility they have' (Butler, 1990:148). In this way, gender is argued to be enacted through discourse. The role of agency can be accepted if it is recognised that the subject is not determined, but rather shaped by cultural norms of gender difference.

While Butler sees that there is no agency outside discursive practices (1990:148), Benhabib (1992) positions the subject differently. She sees the subject as the product of discursive practices but with the autonomy to act with and against those practices (1992). This challenge is the new territory and can only be hinted at through the old discourses. This is the site of intellectual challenge. What is needed is a succession of discursive shifts which move subjectivity beyond where the argument lies currently. This thesis takes the position that although subjects are constituted by discourse, they are not determined by it (Benhabib, 1992). Awareness of the nature of discourse, discursive practices and how discourses make available a range of subject positions allows the individual agency to move among multiple discourses and open spaces for change.

This thesis argues that a social construction discourse of gender, which includes a view of the body as constantly in the process of reconstitution through discourses which open up a range of subject positions is a most useful one for educators (Butler, 1993; Connell, 1995). It enables the examination of the social and discursive conditions which produce femininity and masculinity, to analyse the differences of power which might be inherent in the conditions and to open up alternative subject positions. All theoretical reflection is based in culture and tradition, in discourses which can be critically questioned. Change can be generated from within gender relations. The social construction view of gender as produced in discourse when it takes account of the agency of the body avoids the inherent determinism which maintains the inequities which already exist because of biological, social, historical or linguistic givens of a patriarchal order and is always open to contestation and revision.

It has been suggested by Grosz (1984) that rather than ignoring an essentialism connected with the body, the body as deeply implicated with the social must be taken more seriously. A discourse which includes essentialisms cannot be privileged over any other view in that what is essential is as discursively produced as other views. The weakness, according to Fuss, in the essentialist approach to femininity and masculinity is that the choice of essence must be arbitrary (Fuss, 1989:6). There are discourses about essences but we select which discourse of essence we want to privilege. Perhaps useful questions for those who support a social construction view of gender might be how essences are discursively produced and are how social constructions are normative (Fuss, 1989:6). This

thesis takes the view that both essences and constructions are discursive constructions and neither can have priority over the other.

1.3.3 Discourse

This thesis uses the concept of discourse for examining subject positions available to both teachers and students in terms of gender and power. It uses the two major traditions in the history of discourse (Lee, 1996:15). The first concerns the interrelatedness of gender and power (Foucault 1972, 1977a) and the second concerns language and text (Fairclough, 1992; Kress, 1989). This thesis does not contribute to the theorisation of discourse, it is concerned with describing the processes of 'subject formation through textual practices' (Lee, 1996:18).

In this thesis, discourse is seen as 'systematically organised sets of statements that give expression to the meanings and values of an institution' (Kress, 1995:7). Discourse is linked with ideology in this view in that it is the institutions of society, 'the ideological apparatuses' (Muecke, 1992:21), which produce and are maintained by the privileged and powerful discourses. Like Lankshear (1994: 6), this thesis takes the position that the individual is constituted through discourse. It sees discourse as socially constructed and opening subject positions which can be recognised as meaningful (Gee, 1990). This view of discourse is the one taken to examine the relationship between language, subject positions and gender, and also for interrogating discursive positioning in the classroom.

Discourses, according to Muecke, are 'publicly available ways of speaking, or writing' (1992:21) which are linked to knowledge and institutions of society. This view accords with social theory in which discourse refers to the way in which language structures knowledge and social practice. In this view discourses do not merely reflect knowledge or social practice, they constitute them. Different discourses construct knowledge in different ways. They also situate subjects differently. There are implicit rules which constitute the way that a discourse works and it is these rules which mould a discursive practice. According to Kress in his rewriting of Foucault,

Discourses are systematically organised sets of statements that give expression to the meanings and values of an institution. Beyond that, they define, describe and delimit what it is possible to say and not to say (and by extension – what it is possible to do or not to do) with respect to the area of concern of that institution, whether marginally or centrally. A discourse provides a set of possible statements about a given area, and organises and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is to be talked about. In that it provides descriptions, rules, permissions and prohibitions of social and individual actions (Kress, 1995:7).

This thesis takes the position that discourses are always socially and historically situated and are implicated in the constitution of subject positions. It assumes that some discourses are much more privileged and powerful than others and that the dominant discourses sustain and perpetuate powerful institutions. The individual is seen to be constituted through discourse, power is implicated in the ways in which the individual is positioned towards and across discourses. The discourses are under constant challenge and through challenge are subjected to the process of reconstitution. Although powerful discourses can exclude and marginalise those who do not have access to them, the discourses can be subjected to scrutiny and question and submitted to the processes of change (Cameron, 1985; Cherryholmes, 1988; Fairclough, 1992; Foucault, 1972, 1977a; Weedon, 1997).

From a poststructuralist feminist position language is central to the analysis of social organisations, social meanings and issues of power and consciousness. It is the site in which historically/ politically/ socially/ specific subjectivities are constructed (Weedon, 1997:22). Language makes available a range of discursive positions for individuals to take up. These positions are related to gender, sex and sexuality. Textual practices, as forms of social practice, cannot be separated from the discourses/knowledge of which they are a part (Lee, 1996:2). The lived experience of the subject is then a linguistic construct within which subject positions are taken up and performed (Belsey, 1991; Butler, 1990; Davies, 1989, 1993, 1994).

Central to this thesis are the three categories of language: text, discourse and ideology (Muecke, 1992). Text is seen as 'recognisable units of language, usually organised into sentences and the internal organisation of those sentences with nouns, verbs and pronouns' (Muecke, 1992:21). In this case texts are taken to mean larger print reproductions in the form of narrative. It also includes spoken text, either oral or reproduced in print form. Discourse is defined as 'publicly available ways of speaking, or writing' (Muecke, 1992:21). Discourses are seen to accrue meanings through language practices (Fairclough, 1992, Kress, 1989). Discourses are linked with knowledge and ideology of society and hence with relations of power (Muecke, 1992:21). Language, in the three ways described by Muecke (1992:21) is central to this study.

Language is not neutral, it is a social practice, which takes place in social interactions (Kress, 1988:87). It occurs as text, and not as isolated words and sentences. Texts, either spoken or written, are constructed by participants in discourse. Texts once produced are available for interrogations of their meanings. They are intimately connected with those who produce them. Each person has her or his particular social and linguistic history and brings that history to new situations where new meanings can be made from the available discourses. All students bring to the classroom their previous social and linguistic experiences of speaking, reading, writing and listening. New meanings can be made from the available discourses or old meanings can be reproduced and confirmed. There are a

variety of texts used and produced in the English classroom chosen for this study, the talk between the teacher and the students, taped and transcribed, the writing produced by the students and the range of other texts read, especially the three narrative texts chosen for study.

The texts of the classroom are, as Muecke (1992:63) suggests, spoken and written from different positions which are socially, politically and pedagogically determined. The teachers produce their texts from a position of authority, as experienced teachers of literature and as those with legitimate power in the classroom. The students produce their texts from a subordinate position as learners. There are more complicated subject positions operating simultaneously from the hierarchy of power which operates among the students, a feature of which was gender. Not only do the texts produced come from different positions but they also speak 'to specific positions of the listener or reader' (Muecke, 1992:63). The texts of the teachers position the students in certain ways and the texts of the students position both themselves and the teachers reciprocally. From the texts produced in the classroom this thesis identifies six dominant discourses which are examined by both researcher and teachers.

1.3.4 Ideology

Ideology, for the purposes of this thesis, is defined as 'belief systems' which are expressed through discourse (Muecke, 1992:21). Ideologies are experienced as 'a lived system of meanings and values' (Ruthven, 1990:35) that are both constitutive and constituting. Experienced as social practices, hegemonic meanings and values associated with major institutions of society such as religion, law, medicine, family and education are constituted in discourse. Ideology is manifest in the ways we represent ourselves through discourses and are represented to one another. Ideology constitutes subject positions through language and discourse (Weedon, 1997:31). Ideology refers to sets of meanings, beliefs and values; discourses and discursive practices are understood as the medium through which ideology is brought into material effect; language is understood as the medium through which these meanings are solidified and circulated (Althusser, 1977; Barrett, 1991; Belsey, 1991; Davies, 1993; Fairclough, 1992; Foucault, 1970, 1972; Gramsci, 1971; Kress, 1988, 1989; Weedon, 1997). Ideology is a 'slippery term' (Lee, 1996:14) and not useful for studies of the relationship of discourse, gender and text. Discourse, itself a complex term, can more usefully be deployed to explore textual practices. The focus of this thesis will be an interrogation of discourses operating in an English classroom rather than an examination of ideology.

1.3.5 Constitutive Effects of Discourse

Discourses, as systems of meaning which arise out of social institutions and as genres, which are 'formal conventional categories whose meanings and forms arise out of the meanings, forms and functions of the conventionalised occasions of

social interactions' (Kress, 1995:31) are socially and culturally constructed. Texts, which are given form in discourses and genre, are the product of individual speakers who in turn are discursively produced by the discourses they have access to.

Subject positions are discursively constructed on the basis of particular life histories and experience of being in the world. Yet both this experience of that life history, and how that experience unfolds and is told, is the result of 'intersections of discourses, storylines and relations of power' (Davies, 1994:3). In this way the subject is a discursively produced text which can be read through the discourses produced.

Each discourse offers different possibilities for the reader and different possibilities for social agency. Each discourse 'presents the sets of values, indications of modes of action and behaviour appropriate to being a competent social agent on a given social occasion' (Kress, 1995:40). A discourse also offers the language which is necessary to be a competent social agent in that discourse. Each set of perspectives conceive the relationship of language and subject positions differently and consequently offer different possibilities for change.

Texts provide reading positions for their readers and in turn a range of subject positions. According to Kress (1995:36), the text constructs its ideal reader by providing a certain reading position from which the text seems unproblematic and 'natural'. The reader can either accept the position offered by the text and become its ideal reader or they can be coerced to by cultural practices. For instance, in the classroom certain pedagogical practices can encourage the reader to accept the position offered by the text through the discourses available including those of assessment or they can encourage the taking up of alternative and resistant positions. Reading positions are offered through discourse which provides ways in which the text should be read. According to Kress, reading positions eventually construct subject positions 'that is, sets of statements which describe and prescribe a range of actions, modes of thinking and being, for an individual, compatible with the demands of a discourse' (1995:37). Kress suggests that it is through the constantly reproduced requirements which construct certain subject positions that we learn our subject positions. Readers are positioned precisely by texts, and through these discursive positions they are positioned socially.

In the classroom girls and boys learn to adopt reading positions which they find appropriate and subject positions which provide comfort and success, they learn how to be the ideal student of both the texts and the contexts, whether it be a position of compliance or resistance. As Davies claims,

Individuals, through learning the discursive practices of a society, are able to position themselves within those practices in multiple ways, and to

develop subjectivities both in concert with and in opposition to the ways in which others choose to position them by focusing on the multiple subject positions that a person takes up and the often contradictory nature of these positionings, and by focusing on the fact that the social world is constantly being constituted through the discursive practices in which individuals engage, we are able to see individuals not as the unitary beings that humanist theory would have them be, but as complex, changing contradictory creatures that we each experience ourselves to be, despite our best efforts at producing a unified, coherent and relatively static self (Davies, 1989: xi).

In the classroom the student reader learns social, cultural and linguistic meanings through the discourses which are available. Readers learn what sort of subject positions are appropriate in that classroom. They learn to be members of a community (Kress, 1995:40). They learn how to be students through the pedagogy which is used. They learn how to be participants in the construction of knowledge or they learn how to be subordinate and passive. The context of the classroom presents a set of possibilities for the readers, possibilities of social agency and linguistic competence, subject positions which can be critically enabling or coercively conforming. In order to enable children learn to be critical readers teachers need to tackle the ambiguities which exist in their pedagogical practices. Discourses of both gender and pedagogical practices need to be demystified if alternative spaces are to be made available for readers.

1.3.6 Pedagogical Discourses

The discourses available in the English classroom used for the purposes of this thesis are those which have been learned by the students in previous encounters with narrative texts in classrooms and those which are privileged by the dominant pedagogy operating. Although the pedagogical discourses are in the main inexplicit, they have a powerful influence on the discourses produced. There are contradictory discourses operating. For instance, there is a tension between the explicit discourse which privileges personal response to narrative texts and an implicit discourse which scrutinises the personal response for meanings and values which are expected but not made available to the students. The teachers question the attitudes that many of the students reveal about homosexuality, Aboriginality and sexuality and yet there is no reflection or interrogation of these attitudes. The teachers make judgments about the students on the basis of what they say but often they do not make these judgments available to the students.

1.4 Research Methods

1.4.1 Methodological Principles

The research is ethnographic with the researcher acting as participant observer in an English classroom for two terms in 1993. The researcher's subject position informs the grounded theory approach and the coding process initially used to interrogate and interpret the data and the readings of the discourses produced. The researcher has a close relationship with the teachers and a familiarity with the students and the classroom practices because of the extent of time spent there as participant observer. There is no claim to objectivity in the readings. The background of the researcher informs the research process. The readings are produced out of the interaction between the researcher's theoretical positionings which includes sets of beliefs and values (Jeans, 1997:5). The readings of the classroom interactions are constructed not as truth but as a social site of multiple possibilities. It is assumed that they are 'neither fixed or finite' but rather 'dynamic, expansive and intrinsically shaped by power and the struggle against it' (Lather, 1991a: xxi). The research is constructed as a text in the same way that the discourses produced in the classroom are constructed. It reflects the researcher's position as a subject in discourse, 'situated knowledges' (Haraway, 1988:581). As Ely suggests, all research is 'me-search' (1991:123). It is simultaneously a study of the researcher and what is being researched (Ely, 1991:137).

The researcher's text is deliberately intertextual in that the texts used for its construction are multiple and connected: the texts read, the texts written, the oral texts produced by students and teachers, the theoretical texts that inform the interpretations and the narrative texts produced. Like other texts, this text is seen as continually open to contestation and revision.

The thesis text is deliberately multiply voiced or polyvocal. Throughout the text quotations from other sources, the words of other authors, are taken from their contexts and reproduced and relocated. In this process there are inevitably selections and omissions, gaps, inconsistencies, a foregrounding of that which is chosen and an invisibility of that which is excluded. What is foregrounded is the reflexive, derivative, intertextual, referential, contextual and constructed nature of knowledge, of language and of text (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986). This thesis sees that texts, including this one, are not 'a representation of the event but as part of a continuing process of knowledge production' (Nencel & Pels, 1991:75). It sees that all texts are constructed and produced through the discourses and genres available socially and culturally.

The constructed text of the thesis moves among the third person of the academic voice, extracts from the transcripts of teacher/student/text interaction collected in an English classroom and quotations from the work of others. The third person, impersonal, universal, objective and authoritative voice of academic discourse has

historically had more power than the personal, subjective voice. The insertion of the subject into a text in the form of teachers' and students' voices is an important positioning in feminist research (Nicholson, 1990:3). The deliberate move among the voices is intended to 'interrupt academic norms by writing inside another logic, a logic that displaces linearity, clear authorial voice and closure' (Lather, 1991b:8). The move is also intended to dislodge the impersonal/personal, objective/subjective binaries and the hierarchical relationship between them. Any use of either the personal or impersonal voice is not done with any claim to truth, universality or objectivity but as part of the search for multiplicity. It is intended that 'the accumulation of quotes, exerts and repetitions is also an effort to be "multi-voiced", to weave varied speaking voices together as opposed to putting forth a singular "authoritative" voice' (Lather, 1991b:9). The use of the different voices, partial, contradictory and paradoxical are recognised as located within the discourses and discursive practices within which each is constructed. This location 'weighs heavily in what knowledge comes to count as legitimate in historically specific times and places' (Lather, 1991b:116). The text of the thesis does not claim transparency, it does not attempt to tell the truth about the English class as it really was. Rather the text is a deliberate construction, an exercise in writing the classroom. In the sense of Foucault it is a 'fabrication' (1980:212).

The readings of the texts, the material form of the discourses, transcripts of student/teacher interaction, student/student interaction, written texts of the students, notes of interviews with the teachers and the journal of the researcher, do not assume that there is a single, fixed reality. The readings are one set of constructions of multiple possibilities described in the form of a discourse analysis. The examination of the discourses operating in the classroom and the theoretical discourses which informed the readings is the major research tool. The attempt is to reconstruct the discourses differently to demonstrate the power of those discourses. It is an attempt to seek multiplicity, the 'multi-sided constructedness of ourselves and our worlds' (Lather, 1991a:21), not to prove a singular finding. It is a recognition of multiple rather than fixed meaning. The textual data was read and re-read, particular features emerged as significant and exemplifying the project while other features receded. The features do not speak for themselves, rather they are used as part of the interrogation of the data to demonstrate the agenda of the thesis. The readings of the texts adopt no single analytic methodology, rather they analyse the ways in which gendered positions are produced and reproduced by the participants on the responses to narrative texts. The method developed to read the textual data is in accord with the suggestion of Luke and McHoul in their search for

discourse analyses which embrace the strongest features of both traditions [that is, the Anglo-American and the continental] by being theoretically informed and critical, engaged with specific social and political issues, while also being analytically precise and grounded in actual materials (McHoul & Luke, 1989:325).

The readings of the classroom texts seek to identify the dominant discourses used by the students and the teachers. The discourses are drawn from the textual data produced in the classroom. A coding process, which is open to multiple readings, is used to interrogate the data. The coding process, which is thematic, allows quantification of qualitative responses. In this sense it introduces another textual layer to the heuristic analysis. This process is consistent with the poststructural position adopted by the researcher, is interpretative and a 'search for different possibilities of making sense of human life, for other ways of knowing which do justice to the complexity, tenuity and indeterminacy of most human experience' (Lather, 1991b:52).

The multiplicity of meaning sought in this thesis is not random, unmotivated or neutral. Rather, it is situated within the context of active struggles for meaning. Further, it is situated within discourses which make the apprehension and articulation of choices and struggles possible and capable of conscious action. Lather describes this combination of theory and action in terms of praxis, 'the self-creative theory through which we make the world' (1991b:11). For Lather 'the requirements of praxis are theory both relevant to the world and nurtured by actions in it' (1991b:11-12).

Like Lather, this research is postpositivist and praxis oriented (1991a:51). It has an emancipatory intention in its work with teachers and pedagogy and yet the collection of the data is not openly emancipatory in the terms of Althusser (1977). The research is empirical in that the meanings generated are produced not from other theories but from what happens in the process of data collection (Lather, 1991a:56). After Cherryholmes (1988:107), empirical research includes phenomenology, interpretative research, interpretative analysis (after Foucault) and deconstruction (after Derrida). Empirical research in this thesis is the collection and interrogation of classroom transcripts, which is followed by a reading of the texts and the production of sets of discourses.

The grounded theory approach uses a coding process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in its interrogation of accumulated data and in its readings and re-readings of the data. This thesis sees that the theory follows from the data rather than preceding it in the form of an hypothesis. This is consistent with a poststructuralist position in the reading of the data and the construction of discourses. So rather than starting from the use of an a priori hypothesis, it is dialectical and open-ended and builds its argument through engagement with the collected data – particularly the transcripts – and is informed by the students' writing and the teachers' interviews. This thesis recognises that it is one site with its own structure, boundaries and history, which has been investigated.

As part of a grounded theory approach this thesis recognises and does not minimise researcher-imposed definitions (Lather, 1991a:55). While it recognises the lived experiences and agency of the participants, it also acknowledges the influence of

the theoretical position of the researcher. It sees the tensions which exist between theory which informs research and the influence of theory on research findings but intends that the research is open-ended, collaborative and dialectical (Lather, 1991a: 55). The theory building is collaborative in the sense that the teachers participated in the reading and analysis of the transcripts and students' writing and co-authored the chapter on the teachers' work. This process is interactive and invites 'reciprocal reflexivity and critique' (Lather, 1991a:59) in order to minimise the imposition of meanings by the researcher. The interviews of the teachers are similarly interactive and dialogic. The researcher uses interactive self-disclosure in the interviews with teachers to invite trust and mutual understanding (Lather, 1991a:61). The praxis is achieved by the interactive processes used.

At the conclusion of the coding process the major discourses in the classroom in relation to students and narrative texts are constructed through an interactive process of researcher and teachers. It is discursive practices and not individual subjectivity which are interrogated. The coding process is an interactive and reflexive reading of the data. It is assumed that the subjectivity of the researcher is embedded in a range of discourses, some held consciously, others unconsciously and that the coding process reflects the subject position of the researcher (Jeans, 1997:5). The construction and reconstruction of the coding processes are readings which are enabled by the interpretative frameworks of the researcher as applied to the data. The processes of coding in the theory building are intended to be liberatory for the participants.

Theory adequate to the task of changing the world must be open-ended, nondogmatic, speaking to and grounded in the circumstances of every day life (Lather, 1991a:55).

Processes of deconstruction are central to this thesis. Deconstructions are poststructural ways of examining discourses and texts as operating in relation to each other following Derrida (1976). Following Foucault (1978), it recognises that meaning is always partial. In the tradition of Derrida (1976), it sees that the meaning of a text can never be final. Meaning is constantly deferred as it differs over time and is only ever a fragment of the possible. Deconstructive criticism demonstrates that texts have many readings. The meanings include what is not written as well as what is written. It recognises that what is written depends on the absences, the gaps and the silences and that these have meanings in similar ways to the written. This thesis sees that while knowledge is partial, it is value- and interest-based. It is partial and it is perspectival.

The research data is deconstructed, recognising the instability and multiplicity of meanings but forming a tentative closure which takes into account the power operating in the discourses (Cherryholmes, 1988:48). Non fixity of meaning in the Derridean sense can render invisible the power structures that contextualise

discursive texts. Linking deconstruction after Derrida (1976) with discourse after Foucault (1972), who recognises the connection of discourse and power, enables power structures to be rendered visible. The poststructural approach taken by this thesis allows for textual play with writings and meanings to allow for the possibility of generating further meanings. It sees that poststructural readings can be capable of producing changing and conflicting meanings at the same time.

The readings of the discourses produced in the classroom seek to explore how gendered positions are created and sustained through classroom practices. Gender is deliberately established as the major binary pair to be opened for scrutiny and interrogation. The other binary pair selected is that of teacher and student. These binary pairs work powerfully in the classroom to position and reposition both students and teachers in terms of power. The investigation of the binaries in their connection with texts provides the basis for the interrogation of the readings produced and the dominant discourses identified.

It is acknowledged that the two sets of binaries, female/male and student/teacher, are insufficient to describe the complexity of the power relations which exist in classrooms. In this study they provide the initial impetus for an examination of power in order to suggest ways of denaturalising dominant discourses and make available new realities and new subject positions. This thesis recognises that while an examination of a binary can be seen to sustain the binary, the purpose of this examination is to see how spaces can be opened which might render the binary unnecessary, acknowledging that rendering a binary unstable is to potentially diminish its force.

1.4.2 The Context

A comprehensive high school in a suburb of Hobart was selected as the site of the investigation because of its geographic proximity to the University and because the staff of the school was well known to the researcher. The two English teachers, one female, one male, who participated in the research have considerable experience and recognised expertise. They are active in professional development activities, co-operative teaching and research activities, subject association meetings and conferences. Both teachers are interested in researching the teaching of English and gender issues and are committed to classroom research with a view to change. They willingly co-authored the work on pedagogical discourses, checked the transcripts and participated in the analysis through discussion.

The research was conducted in an English classroom in which narrative texts were taught. This English classroom is one where discussion of texts, particularly narrative texts, is prioritised and it is assumed by many teachers that these discussions lead to a development of language and thought which combines intellect and emotion to shape character and habit. It is also assumed that language, both in speech and writing, is an important medium for exchanging

meanings for articulating ideas and sharing human emotion. Language is also considered to be a powerful force that shapes thoughts and influence ideas.

The class in which the texts were collected consists of twenty-six students, thirteen girls and thirteen boys. As the research is concerned with an investigation of gender, the equal numbers of boys and girls in the class was advantageous for the observations. Most of the students were aged fourteen or fifteen when the data was collected. The school has few Asian and Aboriginal students. All of the students in this class are of Anglo-Saxon background. The class where the observations took place was of mixed social background, although this was not obvious from the way they dressed or spoke. Some were from the local housing department area, while others were rural or from a new five-acre block area. The numbers of rural students in the school have diminished with the growth of housing department areas. In this class there was only one male student with a European background and no one identified as Aboriginal.

1.5 Conclusion

This thesis, initially using a grounded theory approach and subsequently through discourse analysis of multiple texts produced in a classroom, seeks ways of reconstructing literary pedagogy as a form of cultural politics in order to open up new emancipatory spaces for students and teachers. It is the project of this thesis to argue that gendered discourses are available for students to take up within an English classroom and that the discourses are constrained by the pedagogical discourses available to the teachers. The discursive positions taken up by the students are multiple and contradictory but a product of dominant or hegemonic versions of femininity and masculinity which function as oppressive regimes for both girls/women and boys/men. The analyses of the available discursive positions lead to an opening of spaces within the power/knowledge apparatuses of patriarchal structures to produce alternative discourses and subject positions for students and teachers. Such spaces offer the possibility to reconstruct subjectivity and confront issues of marginalisation and oppression. The thesis seeks to demonstrate the importance of shifting the discourses in which students and teachers are embedded and moves towards suggesting alternative discourses which are able to critique and challenge current repressions. It is through deconstructive praxis that an emancipatory pedagogy can be elaborated in the English classroom.

The readings of the multiple texts suggest the intersubjectivity, intertextuality, interrelatedness and indivisibility of author/ reader/ text and knowledge/ knower/ known. In so doing this thesis aims to identify and contest the boundaries that limit understandings of the possibilities for speaking and knowing beyond those currently available. It is a process of deconstructing existing practices and 'rebuilding them in the public domain so that everyone has a chance to influence the outcomes' (Jeans, 1997:9). It is a process whereby 'tacit (subjective) and

propositional (objective) knowledge are interwoven and mutually informing' (Lather, 1991a:66). The focus of this thesis is gender but the processes investigated are equally appropriate for other social categories, including class, race, sexuality, age and disability.

Chapter 2

Literary Pedagogy

Introduction

Teacher Why do you like it?

Girl 1 I'm not sure.

Teacher Next time I hope you will be able to focus more sharply and discuss the world the author constructs for us.
(Teacher reads)

Teacher What does the author do in the first four chapters?

Girl 1 The characters.

Girl 2 The setting.

Teacher I have identified some 'givens'. I am reluctant to use the word 'fact' but they are things which are not disputable.
(Teacher reads from Looking for Alibrandi (Marchetta, 1992))

Teacher I want Richard and Kathryn to sit at this table. Take one of the onions each and tell me what is happening.
(Teacher distributes the onions)

Girl 1 I know. I know. I saw it on the program.

Girl 2 I'm peeling it.

Girl 1 You find a smaller, tinier onion. You saw that on 'Brides of Christ' didn't you?

Teacher Maybe that's where I got the idea.
(Pause)

 The reason I chose onions was because when you chopped it up you see the layers. A book is like an onion. There is layer after layer. The deeper layers are the more interesting for us. Maybe it is painful too and makes us cry. It is the layers of meaning which become the most fascinating.
(Teacher reads)

Teacher We are going to look for these deeper meanings for 'Alibrandi' and I hope for every book. Now we are going to write some personal responses. Over the next couple of weeks we will be doing a range of things, group work, work in pairs etc. But to start we are going to do some individual work.

This extract from the classroom transcripts illustrates the complex pedagogical positioning provided by the teacher. There are a number of ways in which the pedagogy could be read. In this extract the teacher can be seen to shift among the three pedagogical discourses examined in this chapter. The questions of the teacher can be seen to be: 1) Cultural Heritage in the implied assumption that the reader has to work hard at the text to find the true meanings which can be revealed through textual diligence, 'peeling away the layers', to fill in the gaps; 2) Personal Response in that the individual views of students are canvassed and encouraged, 'Why do you like it?' and 3) Critical Literacy in that the construction of the text is foregrounded in inviting the students to look at the world that the author has constructed in the text, 'Discuss the world that the author has constructed for us'. This extract is unusual in the transcripts as direct intervention in this way by the teacher is rare and it serves to demonstrate the way in which the teacher slips from one pedagogical discourse to another.

This chapter examines these three different pedagogical discourses which are available in English classrooms and which impact on gender. The intention is to present a sense of the way the field had developed over time, but also to demonstrate the discourses in which English teachers are currently embedded. More particularly, it is to investigate how two English teachers are discursively positioned in the classroom.

The pedagogical discourses used operate to initiate and position students as gendered subjects within the classroom. To read teachers' pedagogical discourse in this way is to argue that the pedagogical positions produced for the students are an effect of discourse and not personal success or failure of the teachers. The purpose of the examination is to uncover how the pedagogical discourses function, their relationships with historical, cultural and social contexts and how pedagogy as discursive practice works to produce subjectivity, including agency. It is to demonstrate how pedagogy and student responses to narrative texts are put to work in English education to reproduce gendered positions. It is argued that each of the three pedagogical discourses produce responses which are discursively produced within a particular pedagogical regime.

2.1 Pedagogy

2.1.1 Identification of Dominant Discourses of Pedagogy

From an historical overview of the teaching of English, from current theory available to teachers and from the researcher's personal observations of teaching practice, three main pedagogical discourses available to teachers are identified which inform the teaching of narrative texts in the classroom. The pedagogical discourses identified are Cultural Heritage, Personal Response and Critical Literacy (Hunter, 1988, Patterson, Mellor & O'Neill, 1994).

2.2 Three Pedagogical Discourses

2.2.1 Cultural Heritage: Features of the Discourse

Those who in school are offered (perhaps) the beginnings of education in taste, are exposed, out of school, to competing exploitations of the cheapest emotional responses; films, newspapers, publicity in all its forms, commercially-catered fiction – all offer satisfaction at the lowest level, and inculcate the choosing of the most immediate pleasures, got with the least effort ... We cannot, as we might in a healthy state of culture, leave the citizen to be formed unconsciously by his environment; if anything like a worthy idea of satisfactory living is to be saved he must be trained to discriminate and to resist (Leavis & Thompson, 1948:3).

A Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse is linked with the Great Tradition of literature and is closely associated with the work of Leavis (1930, 1943, 1962, 1962, 1964, 1969, 1972a, 1972b, 1973, 1976, 1977, 1979) and with Thompson (1948). Features of this discourse are associated with how the pedagogical discourse situates teachers, readers and texts, the positions it makes available for teachers and readers and the spaces it makes available through texts for interpretation. A Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse supports the view that literature, as aesthetically valued and valuable text, embodies the history, tradition and beliefs of human society and that a study of texts of superior worth gets to the heart of human experience by its power to illuminate the truth. Popular culture in this argument stands in opposition to 'good' literature. It is the moral duty of the teacher to guide the student to seek out good literature as the source of great wisdom and true knowledge. The meaning of the text is assumed to be timeless and universal and it is written in an authoritative voice by an author of great worth. The meaning is seen to reside solely in the text. The view that language is transparent locates the meaning of words such as 'truth' and 'beauty' as fixed and universal transcending time and place. Language is assumed to be a tool of thought which encapsulates a truth about reality. It assumes that great works of literature are artistic creations produced by an author of great insight and talent. Texts of high quality are studied closely to develop an aesthetic appreciation. Close study includes an analysis of such aspects of text as content, form, themes and literary devices. In the above extract from the transcripts, the teacher asserts the truths, the indisputable facts of the text.

Teacher I have identified some 'givens'. I am reluctant to use the word 'fact' but they are things which are not disputable.

She invites the students to find the givens, the facts as opposed to the hidden meanings which they are also invited to reveal. She also asks about literary devices but passes over these quickly.

- Teacher What does the author do in the first four chapters?
- Girl 1 The characters.
- Girl 2 The setting.

A Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse has its origins in the nineteenth century. Although Eagleton claims that in the 1920s questions were asked as to why English should be taught at all (1985:31), the influence of the Leavisites and Richards was so enormous that by the 1930s it was accepted that the subject English, with its focus on literature as the aesthetically valued text, was not only humanising but it made a significant contribution to the developing morality of the society. It was through the engagement with great works of literature that one learned how to be a person, to engage in meaningful relationships with others and to recognise those values which are central in the humanising process. These views were so powerfully persuasive that English came to be seen as the subject which had most relevance to the development of a moral society. In this view the study of literature was considered a rigorous enterprise, especially at university level, and gradually the view was transferred to secondary education. The literature studied had to be the best that the culture had to offer, the quality of the language counteracting the pernicious effects of the debased language of popular culture. So intense were the beliefs about the power of literature to transform the attitudes and values of those who encountered them, that the civilising effects become equated with the fate of civilisation. Without the influence of great works of literature, civilisation as it is known would crumble (Leavis, 1930, 1943, 1962, 1962, 1964, 1969, 1972a, 1972b, 1973, 1976, 1977, 1979).

Central to this view was the recognition of the existence of great works of literature, the canon of literature, which represented the best that had been thought and said. Prior to the twentieth century, literature had very different meaning from the way it is currently used. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, literary study was concerned with the study of letters, focusing on a knowledge of grammar and poetry. A classical education of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which involved only a very small proportion of the population, taught two languages and the development of the skills of rhetoric and oratory. Any criticism, according to some critics, was limited to the indiscriminating praise of who were accepted to be the great authors (Christie, in Green, 1993; Hunter, 1988). According to Bloom the established literary canon is based on aesthetic values which include originality of imagination, 'mastery of figurative language, originality, cognitive power, knowledge, exuberance of diction' (Bloom, 1994:29). Bloom assumes that aesthetic values can be judged and great works identified.

According to this view, the study of literature was to encourage rich, complex, discriminating and morally serious responses, responses that made the reader a better person. Response was achieved through a close reading of the text, often in

isolation from everything else – even the rest of the text – and the development of practical criticism which addressed the tone and sensibility of a passage. Criticism was based on an intuition which valued life itself as the basis of criticism. Works were not placed in their historical context and the beauty of the language and its ability to transform was considered crucial in the enterprise of criticism.

There was a moral certainty about the process. There was little doubt about what works were able to elicit the morally responsible responses. Leavis had no doubt about listing them in his *Great Tradition* (Leavis, 1972). According to Leavis these works represent the best of what has been thought and felt in English culture, conveyed in a language which is considered rich, complex and creative. For Leavis there was no arguing this position. These works were the great works (Leavis, 1972). Few women authors were represented in his canon and the literary interests of women were denigrated by male critics. There was no consideration of how the works could be read or that they might be read differently by different people. There were only good and bad readings.

Leavisite criticism, in its claims to address the unique individual and universal truths, is gender blind and conservative and patriarchal in its implications. The unique individual is normatively male and the universal truths privilege the power relations of patriarchy. Feminist poststructural criticism agrees with Giroux's critique of metanarratives which 'employ a single standard and make a claim to embody universal human experience' (1991:38). The Leavisite position is also criticised for its authoritarianism in its privileging of the critic and interpreter of meaning and in its focus on value-laden criteria of individual sensibility rather than the acknowledgment of learned techniques of reading. Through the gatekeeping of the critics, the availability of texts, and through teaching and study certain works of literature have become institutionalised as canonical. Feminist scholars, not all writing from a poststructuralist position, have questioned the neglect of women's experience in the literary canon, neglect in the form of both exclusion and misreading (Figes, 1970; Gilbert & Gubar, 1979; Janeway, 1971; Millet, 1977; Showalter, 1977, 1984, 1985, 1987).

The impact of the work of the Leavisites was heightened by the theory of Richards (1960, 1963, 1973) who, believing in the power of literature to transform, advocated the use of poetry to change the social order. His view was that poetry, because of its powerful use of language, is more persuasive than film and other forms of popular culture. Like the Leavisites, he saw that society was in crisis but his reasons for the decay were different. For him, it was the new scientific regime, in its claim to be able to solve any problem, which was the enemy. The danger, he saw, lay in the way that science neglected the human, ignoring the traditional ways in which men and women have organised their lives. Religion had lost its potency so poetry was able to fill the gap, addressing those questions that science cannot answer. For Richards, engagement with poetry aided in the development of the sort of mind that he most valued, the contemplative mind, the sort of mind able to

reconcile the complexities of living in the new scientific rationalist world (1960, 1963). He did not see that the sort of mind that he envisaged could be described in liberal humanist terms as the privileged mind, usually male, white and middle-class to the exclusion of all those who do not belong to that group. Presumably there might be others who, given the same advantages, could learn to think and feel like men.

Richards solved the problem of meaning by appealing to the quality of the artist whose fine sensibilities and abilities with language contribute to a fineness of form. The fine poets will have the sort of qualities which will achieve quality expressions in their work, the fine qualities Richards called 'normal'. He did not explain what normal meant and he did not take into account that the responses of males and females might be different, that they might, because of the way that gender is constructed in western society, value different aspects of a work or different works. He suggested that readers will gradually come to realise, through engagement with such work the attributes of quality. He did not explain how this process occurred. His famous experiments in practical criticism revealed to him the psycho-ethical relationship of the student to the teacher/critic who was able to intervene to correct the inadequacy of the response. His experiments, he claimed, also provided the right pedagogical method. In this way, literary criticism, according to Hunter, became the new method of correction and control (1988:163).

Like Richards (1960, 1963), Rosenblatt (1935, 1995) insisted upon close attention to the text and yet she emphasised the importance of the transaction between reader and text. For her, the response of the reader was to be highly valued. Her insistence on the importance of the experience of the reader in the transaction with the text influenced pedagogical discourses without the excesses of some of their positions which would claim that any response is as good as any other response (Rosenblatt, 1995:267). Although she supported the notion of a canon of great literature and in her teaching was concerned about how to introduce her students to the classics, she also warned about the dangers of introducing certain great works too early to students (Rosenblatt, 1995:206). She was both of her time and ahead of her time in her focus on the importance of pedagogy in the development of the critically reflective reader who was able to discriminate among good and bad texts and the values they embody (Booth in Rosenblatt, 1995:vii-xiv).

The Newbolt Report (1921) did not disrupt the view that literature, as aesthetically valued text, was central to the curriculum because of its capacity to reveal truths about experience to students which would not be available in any other way. These quality texts were also to provide the context for the development of reading and writing skills. In this way it was hoped that aesthetically valued texts could be used as a pedagogical tool for a universal liberal education capable of eroding class divisions.

Some critics endorsed the view of the Newbolt Report in claiming the humanising effects of aesthetically valued texts (Shayer, 1972). Others claimed that the use of these texts in the classroom was an ideological mask for the support of the cultural hegemony of the middle class (Eagleton, 1985). Others saw that aesthetically valued texts, as central in the curriculum, was the direct result of governments to control and direct the personal lives of the population (Hunter, 1988).

The subject English became the focus of moral training in the school curriculum through the literary text. In this view, texts such as narrative, poetry and drama were seen as enjoyable experiences in which the children could be immersed and individual expression encouraged. While individual expression was endorsed, it was felt that it is not random and uncontrolled expression which is acceptable. The form of that expression had to be correct. The teacher was not to impose a correct response on the student, rather the response was to emerge through a sensitive relationship between the teacher as expert and the uninitiated student. The literature classroom emerged as the site where the social and the personal could be explored in a non-coercive way.

English is the meeting point of experience, language and society. It implies 'a developmental pattern whose origin and momentum come from outside the school situation, and which is intimately bound up with the individual's whole intellectual, social and spiritual growth' (Whitehead). Such a pattern will be complex and will draw on several disciplines (including psychology and sociology) for a balanced description (Dixon, 1967:85).

This move indicated a shift in Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse. Although the aesthetically valued text was still central, its worth was no longer imposed on the reader. The process became much more persuasive. In order for a non-coercive process to work, the teacher had to gain the trust of the students and to know a lot about them. The teacher, in this view, needed to have certain qualities to enable the process to successfully take place. Sensitivity, honesty, sympathy, a willingness to get to know the students in order to respond to their needs were all desirable qualities for the successful teacher in this view. At the same time it was important that the teacher had a knowledge of literature and an awareness of its aesthetic worth. A more insidious coding of humanist ethics emerged that was complicit rather than overt and coercive.

A second shift which occurred was a change in the nature of the texts used. If the teaching of literature was to have the desired effects of producing morally acceptable students, then the literature had to be accessible to them. Early this century, this proved to be a problem and continues to be a problem. If the type of literature to be taught has to be morally uplifting and the best the culture has to offer, this literature may be the type which is least accessible to the student. For

many students the study of Shakespeare is so difficult and so remote that any engagement with it will not have the desired effect and indeed might have the opposite of the desired effect. Yet this difficulty, which is a very real one to many teachers, did not daunt the writers of the Newbolt Report (1921:87) who claimed that Shakespeare wrote with such beauty that his stories are accessible to all.

This view is somewhat complicated by the same report which also stressed that the meanings inherent in the works of Shakespeare are so complex that they are never available at first reading (Newbolt Report, 1921). So while accessible, they are never completely available and have to be worked at. The text has to be returned to again and again to refine and deepen the meanings gained. This duality of accessibility yet infinite extension of meanings has come to be a feature of the literature lesson. The first reading will never be complete, it will always be interim. The response of the student can never be wrong, nor can it ever be right.

The response which (as a 'valid expression') can never be wrong, is simultaneously the response which can never be right; because it marks the point at which the reader is opened to a set of norms relayed through the English teacher's 'sympathetic inspection' (Hunter, 1988:129).

Nor is it clear, according to this shift, what has to be taught in the literature lesson. While the aesthetically valued text is central, it is claimed by many teachers of literature that literature cannot be explicitly taught. The values and attitudes are to be imbibed through the sensitivity and enthusiasm of the teacher.

Hunter suggests that though literature has great power for some and is supported by the edifice of literary criticism, these two views are not sufficient to explain the privileged place of literature in the curriculum,

Rather it is the outcome of those developments in which literature inherited and transformed the functions of an historically specific moral technology. These were the developments that saw English take shape between an individualising moral supervision and the policing of social space; between the expression of the self and its regulation according to social norms; between an individual who spoke to be corrected and one who listened to correct; and between a text whose surfaces gave immediate access to the experiences of the self and one in whose depths the fullness of such experience remained forever out of reach, invested as it was by norms known only as desires (Hunter, 1988:130).

The dominance of Cultural Heritage discourses which influence the teaching of literature has waned. As the use of literature became increasingly the means of discussing moral values with the hope that it will take effect on the reader, the

subject English is more and more an area for the psychological health of the student (Dixon, 1967; Whitehead, 1966).

The growth of [the young child's] language powers is inseparably bound up with his developing consciousness of the world around him, with his relationships to the people in his family circle about whom he cares most deeply, with his control of his inner fantasies and the feelings they give rise to, and with his growing socialisation – his possession, that is to say, of the values of the civilisation in which he is growing up (Whitehead, 1969:19).

The work of Richards and Rosenblatt contributed considerably to American New Criticism, a movement which was influential from the late 1930s to the early 1950s. This movement advocated the appreciation of literature in purely aesthetic terms, as forms of writing which exist remote from history and society in the realms of beauty and truth and not subject to the earthly considerations of gender, sexuality and power (Eagleton, 1985; Hawthorn, 1992; Lentricchia & McLaughlin, 1995). Because of the pedagogical appeal of a Reader Response Discourse supported by Rosenblatt (1935, 1995) and its focus on the appreciation of aesthetically valued texts, it has contributed to the support of a Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse. It has many features in common with a Cultural Heritage view, yet contests some aspects.

New Criticism's conservative character is revealed most strongly in the notion that is developed about the nature of literary discourse. In the investigation of language, the differences which are seen are labelled as genre differences. Each discourse defines itself as genre, whether it be poetry, drama or novel. The genre is identifiable internally and is separate from other genres. Works which use more than one genre prove difficult to place and to assess. This view of genre is ahistorical in that literature can be analysed separately from the society and the culture of which it is a part. New Criticism developed a critical discourse of its own, one which emerged as academic criticism and has been very influential on the teaching of literature in secondary schools, especially for its moral and aesthetic functions.

The interpretative tradition of Cultural Heritage discourses expects the production by readers of particular meanings, those imposed by previous interpretations and relayed by the authority of the teacher. The tradition is also associated with a range of reading practices which are part of the discourse. In Cultural Heritage discourses, the students are positioned to accept without question the aesthetically valued text as selected by the teacher. The students receive the texts in the context provided by the pedagogical discourse of the teacher. They also accept that the text is one which is aesthetically valuable and they have to accept the meanings imposed by the teacher, whether explicitly or implicitly. The students participate in discussions of the texts. They are expected to study the

language of the texts closely and to extract the correct meanings. They have to develop an aesthetic appreciation of the texts and to demonstrate the responses in writing, usually in the form of essays and in talk. They are expected to use analytical skills to discuss the language of the texts and to provide supporting evidence from the texts. According to this view, they are thus able to compare texts of differing aesthetic values, justify their comparisons, and reveal how their encounters with texts have improved them. Comparison of texts has to include making connections between the texts studied.

Feminist poststructural criticism demands attention to social, cultural and historical specificity (Barrett & Phillips, 1992; Fraser & Nicholson, 1990), unlike criticism associated with a Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse which seeks to fix meaning and privileges dominant readings of gender and particular social interests. Feminist poststructuralist criticism acknowledges that meaning depends on the framework within which a text is read. For example, the three texts which are read as part of this thesis, *Peter* (Walker, 1991) *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992) and *Dougy* (Moloney, 1993) can be read within different frameworks. They can be read either as expressions of male and female experience already constituted in the world beyond narrative, as repressions of subjectivity including homosexuality, heterosexuality, or Aboriginality or as specific examples of the construction of gender through language in narrative texts. A Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse looks for the universal truths in the texts and judges aesthetic qualities.

The students accept the teacher's judgment and assessment of them. As the meanings of the texts are universal and timeless, there is no space for alternative or multiple meanings, it is the dominant reading which must be accepted by the student. The student is positioned by the discourse as passive or compliant and willing to accept the dominant readings. According to Cranny-Francis, "The compliant reader is defined as the reader who adopts the reading position offered by the text" (1994:9). A Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse positions readers to be compliant readers, readers who have access to 'the meaning making practices of the text and to contemporary reading practice' (Cranny-Francis, 1994:9). The compliant reader, according to Cranny-Francis, does not challenge the discursive positioning 'constructed for the reader by this reading practice' (1994:10). The reader complies with the reading position offered by the text or, according to Cranny-Francis, complies with the text 'as processed according to mainstream or institutionally approved reading practice' (1994:10). Approved reading practices have to be learned by the students and yet they are not explicitly taught. Because the discourse operates on universal truths which are hegemonic, male and white, encoding notions of universalised human experience, these have to be accepted. Yet, a contradiction is that the students are encouraged to be autonomous and critically analytic but only in so far as the discursive position of the teacher will allow this. The discourse implies a view of the student as gender free and existing outside relations of power. The discourse, however, cannot recognise issues of difference which include gender, class or ethnicity, therefore it treats the students

as ahistorical, asocial and apolitical. Unable to accommodate difference, the discourse relocates individual experience as universal experience. Difference effaced through a process of universalisation is universalised. The reader is expected to become a better person through the study of literature which is to encourage rich, complex and morally serious responses.

New Criticism, which supports many of the aims of Cultural Heritage discourses, demands of students a rigorous critical technique of analysis and dissection but one which is disinterested, speculative and critically impersonal. For readers influenced by both the Leavisite and New Critical traditions, according to Cranny-Francis, texts are seen to have one right meaning for the reader to uncover (1994:17). In the extract from the transcripts presented at the beginning of this chapter, one reading of the teacher's pedagogical discourse is an insistence that there are 'facts' or 'givens' which can be discovered if the students attend properly and probe deeply. The pedagogical discourse could also imply author intentionality and the importance of prolonged interrogation of a text. Although the New Critics reject the Leavisite notion of author intentionality, they value the text and close reading of it. The critical task is one of detailed exegesis, prolonged clarification and explanation. The tensions and ambivalences of the poem are rigorously examined. Ambiguity is seen to be a distinguishing feature of 'good' literature, which encourages readers to look for complexities in works. As a result of the work of the New Critics, readers are encouraged to read in other than the received ways. This movement has implications for the reading of aesthetically valued texts in the classroom. Readers are not free to interpret widely and take into account the social, cultural, political and historical conditions which give rise to the work but they are encouraged to see that perhaps more than one meaning is possible and that this complexity is to be applauded rather than condemned. It is here that gendered interpretations may be permitted but it is unlikely that they are recognised. Because meaning is seen as part of the function of the text and remains unitary and universal, poststructuralist feminist theory questions the assumption of the presence a single true meaning in a text.

A Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse situates the teacher as expert who has the capacity to select the texts which have these qualities which will encourage cultivates, aesthetic and morally serious responses. The discourse does not include the view that texts are social products and that the criteria of aesthetic value is, according to Kress, after Bourdieu (1990, 1991), a social matter (Kress, 1995:35). He claims that such texts are a product of the operation of power over long periods and the aesthetic values have become solidified into 'the a-historical, a-social, non-power-laden category of taste' (Kress, 1995:35). He suggests that what is considered as the best in literature is the product of 'elite group sets of values' (1995:35) which have become so dominant that they have become naturalised and 'the values of one group are entrenched as neutral values for all groups' (1995:35). Instead, the aesthetically valued text can open spaces for a number of purposes among which are,

to show what a cultural or a social group has, in its histories, regarded as exceptional achievement; to reflect on what has given humans real pleasure; to attempt to relate this to broader social and cultural histories; and, lastly, and for me importantly, to make such texts have real effects, via their effects on individual lives, on the broadest social practices (Kress, 1995:36).

Kress describes a social and cultural explanation of aesthetically valued texts. According to Kress the aesthetically valued text has a place in the school curriculum but it is not the humanising and transforming capacity that Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourses gives to such texts which is gender blind and supports existing patriarchal power relations (1995:36).

2.2.2 Personal Response: Features of the Discourse

Teacher Why do you like it?

Girl 1 I'm not sure.

The words 'Why do you like it?' from the transcript extract demonstrate the type of question which is aimed to elicit personal response on the part of the student. The students are encouraged to answer in any way they like so that 'I'm not sure' can be read as an acceptable answer in a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse.

A Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse has been informed historically by a range of theories including Reader Response theory. Because of the similarity of many features Personal Response and Reader Response are collapsed. A Personal Response Pedagogical Discourses supports the view that language is a holistic, natural process in which meaning is developed by readers as they engage in purposeful and enjoyable reading and discussion of texts. Students engage with large units of meaning in whole texts, often aesthetically valued fictional texts. It is the needs and interests of the students which are central. A Personal Response Discourse supports an emphasis on all modes of language, talk, reading, writing and listening. Encouraged is an exploration of personal experiences and feelings of the students. The discussion is usually open-ended and the importance is placed on quantity and honesty of response rather than an interrogation of responses. The students are encouraged to participate in activities which are seen to be meaningful to them and enjoyable, activities which will allow a range of responses acceptable to the teacher. The Discourse supports learning by doing and activities which have what seem to be authentic purposes for the students.

A Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse includes many of the features of Reader Response theory. Reader Response differs from Personal Response in the way that it values the text. While Personal Response prioritises the individual reader response, Reader Response sees that readers create meaning in interaction with the author's intended meaning. Like Personal Response readers are encouraged to engage emotionally with texts, developing empathy, connecting fictional experience with their own experience and gaining insight into both themselves and the broader human condition. As with Personal Response, Reader Response focuses on response to text and, through response, growth and transformation are the expected outcomes.

The tensions caused by the shifts which occurred in the teaching of English have caused a rethinking of the role of aesthetically valued texts in education. The tension has led to the emergence of a set of discourses which valued individual response to texts. Debate about the importance of the text and the reading process is still significant. Reader Response theorists like Rosenblatt (1976, 1978) support the centrality of the text while insisting on the value of personal response. Other theorist like Dixon (1969) privilege personal response over the text.

The Dartmouth Conference in 1966 (Muller, 1967) has had a significant impact on the pedagogical discourses of teaching text in Australia. A Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse emerged as the answer to the problems that teachers encountered in teaching aesthetically valued texts. The Dartmouth Conference, the first conference on the teaching of English, was convened to discuss competing pedagogical issues and had significant ramifications for the teaching of English in Australia. Significantly, it was an Anglo-American conference, which brought together different theoretical perspectives. The participants were carefully selected to be representative of different points of view and to ensure diversity of experience. The conclusions of the conference, especially regarding the teaching of literature, inform many current pedagogical views either implicitly or explicitly. The conclusions revealed the problems encountered with a strictly Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse and show the influences which led to a shift to a Personal Response pedagogical set of discourses.

The conference took for granted that the teaching of literature is crucial (Muller, 1967:77). It was agreed, according to Muller, that all teachers of literature were concerned with values which they were not to teach explicitly (1967:92). This view failed to recognise the power of the teacher to inculcate the views that they considered important (1967:17). The Conference was unable to agree whether the purpose of engagement with literature was to teach students to become critically reflective, and possibly subversive, or well adjusted to the norms of society (Muller, 1967:17). Most importantly, it was considered that the students should enjoy the literature read. Through enjoyable engagement the students will become more proficient readers with a greater understanding of literature and will develop an enduring love of literature (Muller, 1967:18). While it was agreed that a

Cultural Heritage view was important, there was general agreement that there are no works which are essential.

The Conference agreed that the literature should be enjoyable and meaningful to the students but it should also be such that it would develop their tastes with the view to eventually introducing them to some of the great works of their cultural heritage before they leave school (Dixon, 1969:58; Muller, 1967:80). It was agreed that teaching about literature, literary history and a knowledge of literary forms, genres and techniques was not of benefit to the students (1967:80). Response to literature in the form of discussion of meaning rather than the analysis of aesthetic qualities of the work as enjoyment, was considered far more important than critical analysis, which it was thought could do great harm before a certain age. The discussion as to what was an appropriate age was contentious (Dixon, 1969:60; Muller, 1967:87).

Close reading, however, was to be encouraged, so too was wide reading. This view, according to Muller, reflects 'a modified influence of the so-called New Critics' (1967:87). While analysis remained appealing the Conference rejected the explicit analysis suggested by the New Critics (Muller, 1967:87). It was suggested that progress would be evidenced by the ability to read increasingly complex literature, being able to perceive a relationship between content and form as well as finding increasing satisfaction and pleasure in the unpredictable (Muller, 1967:88). This view was supported by Dixon who suggested that the reader was considered to be a spectator on the lives presented in the literature rather than a participant in it, sharing with the author a way of examining and reflecting upon life (1969:57). He saw that, as a spectator, the reader is in the position to evaluate morally, accepting or rejecting the attitudes and values presented in the literature (Dixon, 1969:58).

The Conference, Muller suggests, agreed that the content of the literature should reflect, but not in a rigid way, the cultural heritage and that the pedagogy should encourage personal response and the ability to make moral judgments through enjoyment (Muller, 1967:19). Skills, according to Muller, should be taught where relevant but literature should be central (1967:98). It was considered that by writing, 'children learn how to order and shape experience, thereby learning more about life and themselves' (Muller, 1967:98). But it was difficult to decide how writing should be taught. It was felt that it is best done through 'engagement' (Muller, 1967:98).

The work of Iser (1974) made a significant contribution to the development of a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse. For Iser, the literary work had two features, first, the text created by the author, the artistic creation, and second, the realisation of the text, which is achieved by the reader, the aesthetic response. In order to read at all, readers have to have a knowledge of the conventions or codes employed by the texts, the rules by which they are governed and through which meaning making is possible (Iser, 1974:xiii).

Iser's view has ramifications for a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse, for the reading of texts and for how literature might be taught. The reader is intimately involved in the making of meaning, not only bringing meanings and knowledge to the text, crucial in the making of meanings but also in making sense of the text.

The idea that there are literary gaps in the text is crucial to Iser's theory which has had enormous effects on the teaching of literature. According to Iser, all texts have gaps which have to be filled by the readers and these gaps will be filled differently by different readers (Iser, 1974:38). What is significant in his theory for the teaching of English is the recognition of the activity of the individual reader who reconstructs the text, filling the gaps as adequately as possible. This theory acknowledges the meaning making activity of individual readers, while not giving them complete freedom to make any meaning they wish. A good text in this formulation is one which challenges the assumptions of the readers and forces them into a new critical awareness. In order to be transformed by the text, the reader must not be too narrow, too ideologically bound. Readers need to be open to the possibility of seeing alternative meanings and of personal transformation (Iser, 1974:xiii). In the extract from the transcripts the teacher explained her intentions to the students.

Teacher The reason I chose onions was because when you chopped it up you see the layers. A book is like an onion. There is layer after layer. The deeper layers are the more interesting for us. Maybe it is painful too and makes us cry. It is the layers of meaning which become the most fascinating.

(Teacher reads)

She is inviting the students to fill the gaps, to find the deeper layers, the hidden meanings. Yet in Iser's model of the ideal reader there is an inherent contradiction. According to Iser, good readers have to be liberal, open to new meanings, flexible and with a willingness to have their ideas scrutinised and questioned. It can only be the reader who is already predisposed to transformation who can be Iser's ideal reader (1978:29). This method can marginalise those readers who do not read in the way suggested by Iser as it fails to take into account the possibility of multiple readings and multiple positions from which a text can be read.

This model of reading is one which is still influential in many English classrooms, where the students are expected to have their ideas open for scrutiny and criticism as a result experiencing transformation, partial at least. The kind of reader most affected by the process is the one who needs to be affected least (Eagleton, 1983:80). Gendered responses can be ignored or deprecated. If a male reader refuses to engage with the text and rejects the subject matter, then this can be taken as a legitimate critical response to the text. If a female reader demonstrates empathy

with the characters and their relationships or concerns herself with hidden meaning, theme and organisation of the text (Purves, 1981:93), then this too can be taken as a legitimate response. A Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse does not recognise how responses are gendered and how readers are embedded in hegemonic and limited views of what it is to be currently masculine and feminine in this society. While the common female response has legitimacy in the classroom it does not have the same power in society at large.

Fish (1980), however, prioritises the reader, claiming that reading is the experience of what the text does to the reader. The experience of the reader and the knowledge the reader brings to the text is of vital importance in the process of interpretation. What the reader is interpreting is an elusive matter for Fish but he resists the notion that any response is adequate. He is convinced that reasoned responses will not diverge too greatly from each other and that debate will be possible (1980:3).

Reader Response criticism, represented by Fish (1980), has important connections with teaching. In one sense it is undeniable that readers can make any meaning they wish from a text and that every reading can be a different one. Teaching methods currently used in some English classes encourage this approach to text and in some classrooms it is the importance the response to the text which takes priority over the meaning which is made. On the other hand, it has been recognised that because language is so embedded in social practice it is unlikely that the meanings will diverge too much (Mellor & Patterson, 1994b:21). Differing meanings will usually exist within a range of competing meanings. There will be difference but usually not totally opposing meanings. Social institutions like schools and universities legitimate certain readings and these privileged meanings relate to the dominant forms of interpretation in society as a whole (Eagleton, 1985).

The tension between the text and the reader continues to be of concern in a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse. This is an issue which Rosenblatt (1995) addresses. She seeks a balance between the response of the reader, the way the reader interprets the text and the position of the text itself (1995:294). Rosenblatt suggests that there are at least two different kinds of reading. The first she calls 'efferent' reading (Rosenblatt, 1995:xvii) where the attention of the reader is focused on the impersonal, verifiable aspects of the text; the second she calls the 'aesthetic' reading (Rosenblatt, 1995:xvii) in which the emotions of the reader are important in the transaction between the reader and the text. While she recognises that there can be no single correct meaning of a text, she is not prepared to accept that all meanings are of equal value (Rosenblatt, 1995:xix). She claims that there are criteria upon which alternative readings can be evaluated and that the development of this critical judgment is what constitutes a literary education. She sees each reader as unique, though produced through individual histories, which include social, cultural, racial and gendered experiences (Rosenblatt, 1995:xix).

Crucial to Rosenblatt's view of a literary education is the development of aesthetic judgment which she sees as fostering social consciousness and self-critical judgment. This development occurs in the transaction between the reader and the text, a transaction which recognises the importance of the uniqueness of the text and the individuality of the reader. She draws attention to the importance of the reader, the reader's experience of the text and the contribution that such empowered and critical readers can make to the sustenance of a democratic society (Rosenblatt, 1995:297). She insists that in order to develop a 'literary' reading the reader must assume an aesthetic stance towards the text. Attention to factual details usually excludes a personal response because of the focus on publicly accepted meanings and would not constitute an aesthetic reading. The aesthetic reading requires that the personal be prioritised, not only in the acceptance of the unique experiences that the individual brings to the text but also in the way the text is experienced individually by the reader (Rosenblatt, 1995:292). Her views support a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse in the way that she values the importance of personal response to text.

In a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse the main subject positions available to teachers are to provide the students with a wide range of texts, many of which will be selected on the basis of their relevance to the students, and to provide the opportunity for free discussion. There is a focus on contemporary literature, popular culture and mass media texts. There is also an assumption that aesthetically valuable texts are read and discussed. The teacher encourages discussion in which the focus is on personal response to the texts. The teacher expects the students to relate their own experiences to the experiences of the characters in the texts. The teacher models ways of responding to texts, shares new texts with the students in the belief that the sharing will encourage wide reading and enjoyment. Writing often takes the form of learning journals and reading logs. The teacher encourages individual learning, intervening only when considered necessary. It is up to the teacher to ask open questions which are often politically motivated and couched in terms of moral sensibility and yet, in the context of a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse, cannot appear to be. The teacher is responsible for the assessment which is on-going.

The interpretative tradition and reading practices of Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse encourages the students to read widely for personal satisfaction and pleasure and respond to the texts read with honesty and sensitivity. Their responses are expected to reveal a moral transformation and an aesthetic development, though what the criteria are for this is often not made explicit by the Discourse. The students are positioned to compare their experiences with those of the characters, they are encouraged to discuss issues they meet in the texts and to discuss their interpretations with the other members in the class. The students are expected to respond to texts, to take responsibility for their responses and to respect the opinions of others.

The key to the relationship between students, teacher and text lies in 'determining the precise point at which to withhold such information' (Hunter, in Luke et al., 1991:67). The students are given the minimum information, just enough to allow them to give a personal response to the text. The lesson will typically take place in an environment which is considered conducive to the moral and psychological development of the students. Hence the importance of the quality of the teacher who must have the appropriate attributes to facilitate the personal response of the students.

Although the students are not expected to analyse the literature in an aesthetic way, they are expected to develop aesthetic and ethical responses – how this aim is achieved, however, is not clear. In the process of eliciting personal responses, the students are encouraged to reveal aspects of the self. The responses are laid bare to the scrutiny of the teacher and to the other students so that they can be aesthetically and ethically reconstructed. The reconstruction may not be explicit. It may be part of both the hidden curriculum and hidden pedagogy. It often takes place within the aesthetic debate about the relationship of the form and the content of the work. The development of the aesthetic personality, one capable of making moral judgments about a work in a detached way that links form with content, is seen to be desirable. The debate about form and content is premised on the assumption that the students read the work 'in order to be wrong about it' (Hunter, in Luke et al., 1991:70).

What is problematic about literary education and the aesthetic personality is that they treat all sorts of social, ethical and political decision-contexts as so many occasions for staging the drama of self-problematisation and self-cultivation (Hunter, in Luke et al., 1992:76).

In the process of the responding to texts in a pedagogy which privileges personal response, the students learn the social and cultural practices which constitute the lesson. They learn the constraints of the lesson. They learn that the classroom where texts are discussed is not the place where knowledge of literature is exchanged or transmitted. Rather the pedagogy is a 'recipe for revealing the state of the sensibility to the teacher and for inducting individuals into a particular practice of aesthetico-ethical cultivation' (Hunter, in Luke et al., 1991:72).

In a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse the student is seen to be morally, psychologically and aesthetically in need of improvement. This development is assumed to occur when the student is engaged with teacher and text. The teacher invites a response and the students respond in a personal way. The teacher attempts to elicit particular responses without being explicit about the type of response they expect. When the student does not respond in the appropriate way the student has failed. The teacher is able to respond too within the special relationship which has been cultivated teaching narrative texts. The teacher has

authority and, through a series of questions, controls what is allowed to be said but encourages responses intended to be spontaneous. The spontaneity itself is controlled as it is not considered appropriate for the student to refuse to engage in the discussion. A response such as 'I don't like this book' would not be considered adequate as a response to narrative texts and would not contribute to the development of the student.

What is considered personal response on the part of the students is only the response considered acceptable in the classroom. What happens is highly controlled and the relationships carefully cultivated and these relationships are gendered relationships. 'They are the products of the ethical practices, aesthetic devices and forms of pedagogical organisation that define and constitute these statuses and personae' (Hunter, in Luke et al., 1991:73).

Personal Response Pedagogical Discourses claim to open unlimited textual spaces for the students. The discourses encourage a selection of texts which situate readers to give a personal response to them. There is a focus on classic, contemporary, mass media and popular cultural texts. Texts are usually selected on the basis of their assumed appeal to the students. Texts are also selected for their capacity to open spaces for the discussion of ideas and feelings and to relate issues in the texts to the life experiences of the readers. The texts are chosen in order to provide opportunities to discuss the experiences, beliefs and values of others. Textual spaces are so open that students are able to say what they want without need of reflection and justification. This practice entrenches gendered reading practices and subject positions which then close down the spaces which are potentially opened. Initially the discussion of a text is seen to be open but once the students begin to respond, they do so in ways that have been privileged by the discourse. The irony in this discourse is that the personal response is not personal but culturally produced. But because the discourse cannot admit that response is culturally produced, the responses to text cannot be interrogated from their status as cultural products. Language is seen as transparent, conveying the intended meanings of the text and the student, neither of which is open to interrogation. Personal responses can be so consuming in the discussion that the narrative text is rendered invisible and merely a vehicle for personal response.

Narrative texts such as *Peter* (Walker, 1991), *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992) and *Dougy* (1993) replicate the gendered and unequal position of females and males and confirm the inequities which are already in existence. They, like many other narrative texts, provide the discourses of hegemony that are so seductive for both females and males (Gilbert & Taylor, 1991). The gendered inequities of the popular cultural text are reproduced in the quality texts written for children but couched in a language which make the values not so apparent or accessible to the reader.

Reading for both girls and boys operates as textual enculturation (Gilbert, 1989). What has not been resolved are questions of the effects and consequences of textual representations of femininity and masculinity for the construction of gendered subject positions. A Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse encourages the reading of such texts, but in its emphasis on personal response, it does not encourage the critical interrogation of the subject positions made available to both females and males in the texts.

Such a pedagogical position sees that most texts have a legitimate place in the classroom. It does not interrogate texts as a crucial part of a network of social meanings which are implicated in the construction of masculinity and femininity. Nor does the discourse allow the investigation of the ways in which texts are implicated in our everyday gendered practices which are shaped by and help to shape the patriarchal order. The contradiction in this discourse is that individual differences are articulated and explored through highly gendered practices which produce a limited range of subject positions. This practice masks the lived experience of the students in the classroom. It is only the individual experience of sameness which is tolerated by the discourse. Individual experience is in terms of heterosexuality and racial hegemony and not in terms of homosexuality, Aboriginality, ethnicity or class. The discourse is not about difference, it is about conformity. Rather than opening spaces of individual difference, it closes down spaces. The discourse ignores the ways in which texts naturalise gender differences so that they seem inevitable and desirable.

In a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse, girls are legitimated in an emotional response to the text. Their feelings are encouraged in the classroom and the emphasis on relationships are affirmed. On the other hand, boys are confirmed in their tendency to remain more remote from the text and they are encouraged to make reasoned judgments. Such practices which are part of a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse confirm and perpetuate current patriarchal views of femininity and masculinity.

The texts that girls and boys are encouraged to read also re-inforce popular cultural views of femininity and masculinity. From an early age girls are encouraged to read fairy tales and stories which affirm versions of femininity which focus on beauty and dependence while boys are supported in their reading of either action-based adventure stories or factual and scientific material which encourages a relation to the world which has agency, control and power (Davies, 1993, Gilbert & Taylor, 1991).

A Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse encourages girls to see that the texts they read are just as lived as lived experience and assume an important role in their lives, especially in their private moments (McRobbie, 1984). They are encouraged to use fiction to escape the demands of real life, to relax and to learn how to behave in real life situations (Willinsky & Hunniford, in Christian-Smith, 1993).

There is evidence that boys use fiction for similar purposes. What differs is the representations of femininity and masculinity in the texts that girls and boys are reading (Taylor, in Christian-Smith, 1993:131). Texts are used as a form of preparation for life or in order to understand one's place in life. Sometimes girls use fiction as a means of discovering resistance and agency and as a way of exploring alternative ideas of gender. Despite the possibilities for resistance which some girls use, patriarchal ideologies in texts used in the classroom are powerful and persuasive (Rogers Cherland & Edelsky, in Christian-Smith, 1993; Davies, 1989).

2.2.3 Critical Literacy: Features of the Discourse

Teacher Next time I hope you will be able to focus more sharply and discuss the world the author constructs for us.

This is the only comment from the transcript extract which can be read as part of a Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse. The students are asked to consider that the world of the text is a 'construct'. This could suggest that she is encouraging the students to see the text as socially constructed. This is complicated by her use of the words 'the author' which could link her discourse with that of Cultural Heritage in a privileging of the author and authorial intent, as could her instruction to 'focus more sharply' on the text they are reading, which could suggest a close textual reading to find the meaning the author intends or the dominant reading. These words could also imply a critical reading.

A Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse supports the view that texts are social constructs reflecting the beliefs and values of their time and culture. It proposes the view that texts have multiple meanings and that readers are positioned by texts, by the structure of the discourse and by the point of view that represents the ideology of the author. It accepts that texts offer only partial versions of the world and that they produce and reproduce unequal power relations. Critical Literacy expects the students to examine the ideologies which are embedded in texts. The students consider the ways in which, as readers, they are constructed and positioned by the texts. An analysis of the ways in which texts open up subject positions for the readers helps the students to see how they are positioned and to contest the subject positions they have been offered. The students are also able to develop contesting and oppositional subject positions. In the acts of opposition and contestation, change can be worked for and social justice issues can be tackled.

Personal Response Pedagogical Discourses see that the use of texts, including the aesthetically valued text, in classrooms opens positions for readers which are transformative, of moral and intellectual benefit and which work in mysterious

and unpredictable ways (Dixon, 1969; Muller, 1967; Whitehead, 1966). Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourses see the aesthetically valued text as but one of the many texts or genres which are socially and culturally produced and subjected to the workings of discourse and power within society (Apple, 1989, 1990, 1993; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Fairclough, 1989; Foucault, 1972, 1977a, 1977b; Luke, 1994). If it is admitted that literature is a cultural product, then its location as part of curriculum has to be based on 'culturally located models of teaching and learning and on discourse analyses of talk around the social practice of writing' (Luke, in Freedman & Medway, 1994:x).

A Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse situates the teacher to construct pedagogies that start where the students are and generate innovative and critical cultural action (Luke, in Freedman & Medway, 1994:x). Different spaces are opened for interpretation. The questions introduced into an inquiry into the teaching of texts, when the enterprise is seen as one which is socially and culturally produced, include questions about gender, race and class which underpin the writing practices, the way that literature positions readers and writers as well as those in the text and the ways in which some are excluded from the text or the reading. These are ethical and political questions which are currently being asked of the teaching of literature and have implications for what texts are taught and how they are taught (Freedman & Medway, in Freedman & Medway (eds) 1994). Such questions provoke an investigation into the social processes and operations of power within discourses. With literature such a critically aware approach offers a way of examining how readers can read, how people are represented in literature, the nature of the sanctioned representations and the implications of these issues for people's lives. Literature as a genre, according to this view, is seen as, 'Inescapably implicated in political and economic processes, but at the same time as shifting, revisable, local, dynamic and subject to critical action' (Freedman & Medway, in Freedman & Medway (eds) 1994:15). Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourses open overtly political and subversive spaces for readers with the intention of producing the sort of questioning readers who will want to change society in order to redress inequities and achieve social justice.

Current positions of critical literacy have emerged from two traditions, critical social theory and critical literacy pedagogies which are more concerned with reader responses to literary text (Luke & Walton, 1993). Critical social literacy variants include critical pedagogy approaches linked with the work of Freire (1976, 1990) and discourse analytic approaches (Gee, 1990). Critical Literacy theoretical and pedagogical approaches have also been influenced by poststructural interpretations of texts and constructions of textuality and deconstructions of texts (Kress, 1995; McLaren, 1995).

Poststructuralist theory in its questioning of the political production of knowledge and the intimate connection between discourse, power and the subject has contributed to Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourses. From a feminist

poststructuralist perspective the meaning of gendered subjectivity refuses to be fixed and final. Derrida's work suggests that language is governed by what he terms *differance*, a principle in which meaning is the result of differences between signifiers and is constantly subject to deferral. It is difference between signifiers which allows the movement of signification and the impossibility of fixity of meaning (Derrida, 1973:142). His theories offer a method of deconstruction that recognises the instability and multiplicity of meanings which suggests that particular versions of masculinity and femininity are not inevitable.

For poststructuralist theory, the text is not closed with definite meanings which can be discovered by the critic, as with structuralist theory. Rather it is open, its meanings are plural and diffuse, it is open to dispersal and fragmentation (Barthes, 1975, 1977a, 1977b; Derrida, 1973; Eagleton, 1983). While structuralism affirms the process of cutting up a text into binary oppositions, poststructuralist theory, through the process of deconstruction, after Derrida (1973), critically re-reads and develops the insights of structuralism. Deconstruction sees that meanings are plural and diffuse, operating in complex webs of textuality of which all texts are a part. After Derrida (1984), Lather sees that deconstruction is not a method but a disclosure of how a text functions whose goal is to remain open, to disrupt, to demystify and to contest the constitution of discourses (Lather, in Luke & Gore, 1992:120).

Critical Literacy in education is informed by sociological movements in the 1970s which began to investigate and privilege an approach to the exploration of meaning in terms of agency, interaction and lived experience. In prioritising the lived experience of the subject, this view excludes the coercive nature of the ideologies of society. This exclusion led to a renewed interest in how the structures of society determined inequalities and oppression. A focus on the rigidity of the structures and the difficulty of shifting these gives little hope for change (Luke, 1993).

Critical pedagogy of the 1980s claimed to provide transformative agency. It assumed that if students were encouraged to articulate their meanings and juxtapose them against dominant cultural meanings, then new liberatory meanings could be developed (McLaren, 1995). This new move in critical pedagogy linked with new or revived moves in the teaching of literature which prioritised reader response. The readings of the students in contact with the meanings of the text interact to produce a range of diffuse, though culturally constrained, meanings (McLaren, 1995).

Critical pedagogy developed from the theories of Gramsci (1971) and Freire (1990). Gramsci (1971) contributes to feminist critical pedagogy as he introduces the idea of hegemonised subjects who potentially have the power to contest their ideological positions. He acknowledges the powerful control of hegemony but he sees that in its diversity and complexity are spaces for contestation (Gramsci,

1971). The school, and by extension the literature classroom, provide the site for the development of a critical language crucial for critical consciousness.

Freire's (1990) contribution to a critical pedagogy is in the development of a critical literacy which aimed to provide students with the skills to critique the ideological sources of inequality and disempowerment. His pedagogy centres on the importance of student voice and student problematisation of knowledge (Freire, 1990). Freire's pedagogy emphasises the transformation of social relations. His theory of empowerment through conscientisation involve critical reflection on lived experience as the basis for transforming emancipatory action. Thus for Freire, reflection leads to action. Conversely, when a situation calls for action, that action will only constitute an authentic praxis if its consequences become the object of critical reflection (Freire, 1990:41). Knowledge emerges only through intention and re-invention, and through 'restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry' (Freire, 1990:46).

Giroux (1984) identifies three aspects of the relationship between ideology and individual experience: the sphere of the unconscious, the realm of common sense and the sphere of critical consciousness. Giroux (1984) emphasises that historical and social forces are implicated in each of these aspects, and suggests that when subjectivity is acknowledged, a historically and socially constructed critique of the hegemony of the dominant society is made possible. This critique occurs through analysis and contestation of everyday, common-sense, taken for granted practices which are historically and socially constructed. Such critique is made possible through the sphere of critical consciousness which exposes the historical and social forces which shape the construction of knowledge, social relations and material practices. Such critique is thus critical to the process of transformation and change.

The purposes and visions of a critical pedagogy are grounded in a politics, and view of power and authority, which linked teaching and learning to forms of self and social empowerment through individual and collective action. This pedagogy articulates and suggests forms of community life which 'extend the principles of liberty, equality, justice and freedom to the widest possible set of institutional and lived relations' (Giroux, 1991:56). Central to this pedagogy and politics of personal and social transformation is a notion of community developed around a shared conception of social justice, rights and entitlements which open up the range of possible social relations, subject positions and human capacities as the basis for a compassionate social order. The subject is enabled by critical knowledge which has as its goal,

not the legitimization of power but the enabling of empowerment ... it seeks ... not to reduce complexity but to create a world in which a reconciled humanity recognises itself (Benhabib, 1990:109).

Poststructuralist feminist theory provides 'a radical social theory imbued with a language of critique and possibility' (Giroux, 1991:44). Implicit in these discourses of possibility are new relations of schooling which make possible 'the construction of new paradigms, and creation of a pedagogy that makes concrete how they might be taken up by teachers and educators so as to create a postmodern pedagogical practice' (Giroux, 1991:44). Giroux articulates principles for a critical pedagogy which situate pedagogical issues and practices within a wider political discourse. Within this discourse, education is seen as producing not only knowledge but also political subjects. Such a view requires that students are provided with opportunities to develop the critical capacity to challenge and transform existing social and political forms, rather than simply adapt to them. Thus, for Giroux, pedagogy is defined in terms of those political practices that question how individuals learn, how knowledge is produced and how subject positions are constructed. Pedagogical practices are defined in terms of the forms of cultural production, social, historical and political, which construct particular subjectivities and views of the world (1991). Critical pedagogy in this view is defined in terms of those theories and practices which emphasise breaking down the boundaries between disciplines and the creation of new spaces in which new forms of knowledge may be produced.

Critical pedagogy, in combining a language of critique and possibility, articulates a sense of alternatives (Giroux, 1991). As part of this language of possibility teachers can explore opportunities for the construction of knowledges in which,

multiple narratives and social practices are constructed around a politics and pedagogy of difference that offers students the opportunity to read the world differently, resist the abuse of power and privilege, and construct alternative democratic communities (Giroux, 1991:49).

Thus Giroux suggests that teachers need to develop pedagogical practices that not only heighten the possibilities for critical consciousness but also for transformative action. Such practices are seen by Giroux to affirm the primacy of the social, intersubjective and collective, and enable students to 'speak in dialogical contexts that affirm, interrogate and extend their understanding of themselves and the global contexts in which they live' (Giroux, 1991:54).

Such a discourse of possibility is more than 'an outmoded vestige of humanist discourse' and need not 'dissolve into a reified form of utopianism' (Giroux, 1991:54). Instead it can be developed as a precondition for 'nourishing convictions that summon up the courage to imagine a different and more just world and to struggle for it' (Giroux, 1991:54).

In identifying the primacy of culture as a pedagogical and political issue, Giroux (1991) identifies the ways in which schools function in the shaping of particular identities, values and histories by producing and legitimising specific cultural narratives and resources. In this way, the curriculum is conceived as a cultural script through which specific stories and ways of life are structured. Critical pedagogy, critical consciousness and discourses of possibility acknowledge the potential for the creation of new texts.

For Connell, 'the centrality of gender inequalities for pedagogy place a general demand on education to address issues of gender' (1994). As conceived by Connell, 'a good education is founded on social justice' (1994:11). Thus, Connell believes that if we do not pursue gender justice in schools we are not offering students 'a good education'. Instead, we maintain male hegemony and privilege, and education, suggests Connell, is the purpose of schooling, not privilege (1994:11).

The high visibility of gender in social justice and equity programs and policies, and in status in almost all progressive pedagogical tracts, easily obscures the fact that equal space and representation in curriculum, policy or the conference agenda does not in itself necessarily alter the status of the feminine as an add-on category or compensatory gesture. As such, the poststructuralist feminist agenda remains focused on challenging incorporation and marginalisation (Luke & Gore, 1992:6).

The struggle for a different social organisation requires acknowledgment and articulation of plurality and multiplicity which would make possible 'a relation of two presences between the sexes' (Gatens, 1991:121). This relation is one of mutuality and reciprocity and not one which exists between subject and object, self and other, or one and its complement. It is through a critical pedagogy, especially one which makes visible the power relations of the discourses, which we can work to achieve a greater measure of equality. It is argued that, 'The aims of equality and respect are met by highlighting differences, not by transcending them or looking beneath them for a common foundation' (Giroux, 1991:83).

A Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse operates to position teachers to present a range of contrasting and contradictory texts in order to open spaces for the students to critically interrogate them. The teachers are situated by the discourse to make texts problematic and to present them for interrogation. The problematisation of texts by the teacher situates students to produce a multiplicity of meanings, but it is difficult for the teachers to impose meanings on readers without closing down the apparent openness and multiplicity. A contradiction for the teacher in this discourse is that while particular forms of resistance are expected, the teacher is unable to impose readings on the students for fear of closing down the spaces opened up for the students in the first place. Texts are problematised from an historical and social perspective. They are no longer considered to be universal and to express truths about what it is to be human.

They are treated as social constructs which exclude as much as they include. The texts are interrogated for alternative meanings, exploring which groups have been included and which marginalised. The result of the problematisation of meanings and the consequent revelation of a multiplicity of meanings is intended to make available a range of reading positions and to liberate the student. Teachers have the powerful position of assessing students' abilities to critically analyse texts, to construct alternative readings and to produce texts which are liberatory and work for equity and change.

Teachers are aware that the positions open to them through pedagogical discourses are contradictory and conflicting, yet many of them accept the importance of helping readers to become 'resistant interrogators of a range of texts' (Corcoran, in Corcoran, Hayhoe & Pradl, 1994:12). Corcoran suggests that a phenomenology of reading, which would take account of the conflicts, needs to be developed (Corcoran, in Corcoran, Hayhoe & Pradl, 1994:13). He outlines 'seven theoretical sketches' which suggest how different theories might be linked with reading practices, personal and cultural, and used to develop classroom practices which open spaces for readers. In order for readers to develop resistant reading strategies, they need to have an awareness of the ideologies which are at work in a text and how particular reading practices can help or hinder a critical reading. If readers are capable of identifying the ideologies implicit in the texts, then they can be helped to move from personal responses to resistant responses where appropriate (Corcoran, in Corcoran, Hayhoe & Pradl, 1994:13).

There is not a particular set of practices in Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse which can be easily revealed to the students. The students are subjected to a pedagogy, expected to respond in particular ways and are expected to unmask sets of ideologies in texts. The danger of this is that the authority of the teacher and the school is not made visible for questioning by the students. The aims are difficult to achieve because the requirement of a Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse is that the reading is 'realised in the student rather than imposed by the teacher' (Mellor & Patterson, 1994b:21). According to Mellor and Patterson, in a Critical Literacy discourse there is an injunction 'to teachers to teach and yet not teach' (Mellor & Patterson, 1994:22). What is argued is that as a reading is produced, new reading positions are opened to the reader, 'That is, the production of a new "unblinded" subjectivity is necessary to produce a newly "conscious" reading – which in turn is necessary for the production of a new unblinded, critical self' (Mellor & Patterson, 1994:23). The unblinding is assumed to occur through practices which free the students. It is not clear, however, what these practices might be. What is clear, according to Mellor and Patterson, is that the Critical Literacy pedagogy requires the production of particular readings 'no less than the Cultural Heritage or Personal Response English classroom' (1994:24).

Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourses aim to create spaces in which new forms of knowledge can be produced. They position the teacher as responsible for

creating new forms of knowledge through the spaces which are opened for the students. Yet it is not clear how new spaces can be opened nor what new forms of knowledge are acceptable to this discourse. Nor is it clear how students can be encouraged to take up the spaces theoretically opened for them. Critical Literacy also seeks a different relationship between teacher and learner, one which shifts traditional power relationships. While one can make visible the power relations which exist in discourses, it is not clear how a greater measure of equality can be achieved through this process.

The discourses of Critical Literacy pedagogy require that readings which are produced in the classroom in engagement with texts are resistant to power. There is an imperative on the teacher to remove power constraints to enable the students to produce meanings. The pedagogy can do this by removing the impediments which might prevent the students from producing a resistant reading. In this way, according to Mellor and Patterson, the teacher allows readings 'to be produced by the newly critical reader' (1994:24). The teacher does not teach particular readings. In order for the critical readings to emerge, a pedagogical process is assumed. Mellor and Patterson suggest that it is assumed that first readings of texts are inadequate, that initial readings need to be questioned, that teachers do not teach readings and that teachers allow students to produce their own readings (Mellor & Patterson, 1994:25). This position is very like that which is adopted by a Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse and a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse. In all discourses the readings of the students are inadequate and have to be problematised. In the Critical Literacy discourse the readings are inadequate because the readers have not learned how to read in a critically resistant way. They have been prevented from doing so because of the practices they have learned from the Cultural Heritage and Personal Response Pedagogical Discourses (Mellor & Patterson, 1994:27). The reading practices which are required allow 'the readers to see through the ideological assumptions of the text and its readings, and to read them' (Mellor & Patterson, 1994:29). This is seen to happen in a sympathetic classroom environment. What happens, according to Mellor and Patterson, is that 'students are judged to have produced their own readings, autonomously and independently, when their readings meet particular requirements' (1994:38). According to this view the readings must show critical consciousness. They must be able to produce multiple reading of a text, which can be as directive as being asked to produce 'a specific reading' (Mellor & Patterson, 1994:38). This view presents problems to teachers and to students in that the promise of freedom can result in reading positions which are as equally restricted as those of Cultural Heritage and Personal Response. It is not clear how the acceptable meanings are produced if they are not taught. Nor is it clear that the freedom to produce multiple readings will guarantee appropriate readings or provide subject positions in the classroom where sexist, racist and classist readings are accepted as part of an acceptable range of multiple readings (Mellor & Patterson, 1994:42).

Instead of acknowledging the importance of the personal response as Corcoran does (Corcoran, in Corcoran, Hayhoe & Pradl, 1994), critical theorists claim that

readings are cultural rather than personal. Readers interpret texts using the cultural knowledge they have accumulated rather than what they claim to be personal opinions. They argue that reading practices are taught and that readers need to know the practices necessary to become critically resistant readers (Patterson, Mellor & O'Neill, in Corcoran, Hayhoe & Pradl, 1994:72). A resistant reader is one who does not comply with the 'institutionally approved reading practice' (Cranny-Francis, 1994:10). An important distinction to make, according to Cranny-Francis, is that a resistant reader 'may be more or less conscious of her/his rejection of the positioning offered by the contemporary mainstream reading of the text' (1994:10). A reader can indicate resistance by expressing a dislike of the text or resistance can take the form of analysing the text and giving reasons 'for rejecting the positioning offered by mainstream readings of the text' (Cranny-Francis, 1994:10). In both cases, according to Cranny-Francis, the resistance is a result of a tension between 'the discursive positioning occupied by the reader and that offered by the text' (1994:10). Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourses position readers to understand their discursive positioning and to have the capacity to analyse how texts position readers. 'It subsequently enables readers to explicate those readings and textual practices for others' (Cranny-Francis, 1994:10). Although these practices are intended to empower readers, it is not clear what the practices are or how they are taught.

A Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse can benefit from poststructuralist feminist theory. Lee (1994) suggests that literary theory informed by poststructuralist theories functions to open up the possibilities of meaning in texts. She also suggests that this theory will understand texts to be 'plural, or polysemic (multi-meaninged)' (Lee, in Corcoran, Hayhoe & Pradl, 1994:93). Meaning will not be single or fixed. Poststructural literary theory encourages the possibility of asking the sort of questions which open up rather than close down meanings, including the sort of questions which relate to the marginalisation of issues like gender and sexuality. She claims that,

Rather than refuse other readings, a classroom practice informed by poststructuralism entertains and explores readings produced from different perspectives and traditions, including dominant traditions (Lee, in Corcoran, Hayhoe & Pradl, 1994:104).

This poststructuralist literary approach allows Lee to claim that a number of different readings of any text are possible. In fact she claims that 'all we can ever have are readings' (Lee, in Corcoran, Hayhoe & Pradl, 1994:103). While Lee claims there is no single meaning to a text, she acknowledges that all readings are not of equal value either because they do not have the same cultural currency or because they do not appear to sanction themselves in the same way through evidence in the text (Lee, in Corcoran, Hayhoe & Pradl, 1994:101).

Poststructuralist literary theory encourages a critical approach to texts which sees meanings as multiple rather than fixed, as culturally produced rather than fixed in the text, as produced by readers rather than residing in the text. Readers can learn to become resistant, to disrupt the text but this is a difficult process particularly with expressive realist fiction which invites closure. In order to critically deconstruct the text, the reader can be encouraged to examine the process of its production, not the private experience of the author. Deconstruction, which reveals the plurality and partiality of the text, encourages the reader to open the text to the possibility of multiple meanings and to interrogate it for the implicit ideologies that it contains.

Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourses and their consequent practices need to be able to reconcile the teacher/student binary, so that both are understood as simultaneously teacher and student, and the active/passive binary (Giroux, 1984; Freire, 1990; Lather, 1991a, 1991b, 1992). It is important to recognise that students who are positioned as passive recipients of knowledge are less likely to develop the critical consciousness which could result in transformation of the world. Active inquiry, participation and reflection can result in transformative consciousness and such consciousness is motivated towards critical intervention in reality. Students need to be encouraged to critically perceive, and reflect on, the way they exist in the world in which they find themselves. In this way they can come to see the world not as a static reality 'but as a reality in process, in transformation' (Freire, 1990:56). In this conception of reality, consciousness and world are understood as simultaneous. Simultaneous reflection on self, world and reality increases the scope of perception and allows the observation of 'previously inconspicuous phenomena' (Freire, 1990:55). Thus, that which had been invisible is made visible. Critical perception and reflection is thus embodied in action directed at negating and overcoming given limits or boundaries.

Students are expected to use discourses of resistance to texts. These discourses can provide students with access to critical discourses in order to deconstruct texts. However, as suggested by Kramer-Dahl, it is pedagogically naive of the teacher to expect students to use strategies of resistance without equipping them with the discourses that make resistance possible (Kramer-Dahl, 1993). While the students are expected to develop critically analytical skills, it is not clear what these skills are or how they are to be taught. Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourses suggest that students can be positioned to take action to achieve social justice, to develop the critical capacity to challenge and transform existing social and political forms and to take the sort of emancipatory action suggested by Lather (1991a:xi).

2.3 Conclusion

Teacher We are going to look for these deeper meanings for 'Alibrandi' and I hope for every book. Now we are going to write some personal responses. Over the next couple of weeks we will be doing a range of things, group work, work in pairs etc. But to start we are going to do some individual work.

The extract from the transcript demonstrates how the teacher slips through the three pedagogical discourses examined in this chapter. To look for 'deeper meanings' can be read as part of a Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse which sees that the text holds the meanings and if the reader probes deeply, the true meanings will be revealed. The invitation to write 'personal responses' is integral to a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse. The suggestion that a range of activities from group to individual could suggest a Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse with critical reflection and it could also suggest unmediated personal response. Each of the discourses provide different discursive openings for student response and situate students differently.

This chapter has examined three pedagogical discourses available for teachers of texts: Cultural Heritage, Personal Response and Critical Literacy. Each set of discourses is informed by different histories and theories and positions the teachers, the students and the texts differently. It has examined how pedagogical discourses situate texts, how readers receive texts in different ways depending on the pedagogical context in which they are read, and how teachers position both text and reader through the pedagogical discourses they use. It shows how texts are read through previous interpretations and reading practices developed by socially produced interpretative traditions. The examinations of the pedagogical discourses are used to inform the readings of the texts produced in the research.

Chapter 3

Textual Collections: Methodology

Introduction

- Teacher I have written on the board, 'Mrs. Smith is a lesbian'.
- Girl 1 She can't be.
- Girl 2 She's got children.
- Girl 3 She's got a husband.
- Boy 1 I don't care.
- Teacher Are you saying that it doesn't matter?
- Boy 1 No, I'm just saying I don't care. (*displays contempt*)
- Teacher Are you saying that it does not matter how much respect you have for other people what their sexuality is?
- Girl 1 I do not think it makes any difference what you are.
- Teacher So you would apply this to one as well?
- Girl 2 Yes, I do not think it makes any difference.

This extract from the transcripts demonstrates the role of the researcher in the ethnographic collection of the data. The 'Mrs Smith' referred to by the teacher is the researcher, who was asked by the teacher if she minded being named in this way on the board. This act represented the trust and the reciprocity which existed between teacher and researcher. The researcher did not interfere with the pedagogical practices of the teachers and agreed to the suggestion. The teacher's intention was to try to open up interpretations of difference for the students. At this stage the students were accustomed to the presence of the researcher and had gained knowledge about her life and her background. Occasionally they asked her questions and included her in their conversations. The responses of the three girls show their recognition of the researcher in the class and the ways in which they had begun to construct her. She is not an anonymous observer but a part of the classroom life. For the boys it was an issue that they did not care about, wish to discuss or were contemptuous of. This extract also demonstrates the gendered nature of student responses, the girls with limited understandings of possible female positions but willing to accept what they term as 'difference', the boys resisting engagement.

3.1 Research Approaches

3.1.1 Methodological Principles

The data collection was deliberately ethnographic in its concern to account for the specificity of experience and response to a patriarchal culture. The researcher was immersed in a classroom for two terms while the subject English was taught with a particular focus on narrative texts. It was the intention of the researcher to be in close contact with the researched, two teachers and the students, and to participate in the lived experience of the classroom. There was a danger that by focusing on student response to text the researcher might endorse either a relativist or a reductionist view of the subject as sole producer of text. The intention was to ask to what extent were the student responses framed by the pedagogical context they are in. A self-reflexive attitude on the part of the researcher was intended and a reciprocity between teachers and researcher was encouraged. The researcher did not overtly interfere with the pedagogy of the teachers, although it is recognised that a participant observer in the classroom makes a difference to what happens. The events of the classroom were discussed extensively after each lesson, with the teachers sharing their responses with the researcher. The transcripts collected by the researcher were shared with the teachers for checking and verification. Through the reciprocal interaction of teachers and researcher, the transcripts were analysed for existing discursive positioning in order to find ways of producing new meanings for both teachers and students. The research methodology thus had an openly transformative agenda, using the 'epistemological break' after Althusser (1977) to develop a critical practice with 'an openly emancipatory intent' (Lather, 1991:51). It is praxis oriented, interactive and contextualised, using the joint participation of researcher and teachers in the exploration of the research issues and the analysis of the transcripts. The reciprocity is intended to increase awareness of contradictions or taken for granted understandings of pedagogy in an English classroom in order to reveal possibilities for pedagogical transformation. The transcripts were used to record the events of a classroom in order to analyse the discursive positions available with the view to change.

One of the aims was to use a form of empirical research which would advance emancipatory knowledge (Lather, 1991:54). A grounded theory approach to the initial analysis of the transcripts was used in the context of producing both the dominant discourses taken up by the students and the dominant pedagogical discourses of the teachers with the purpose of examining the relationship between them. The process was open-ended and dialectical in its focus on the lived experience of a classroom over an extended period of time and at the same time recognising that inequities existed in that classroom. It was the purpose of researcher and teachers to make visible those inequities in order to transform. This praxis oriented research was to enable both researcher and teachers to reflect on the pedagogical discourses dominant in the teaching of narrative texts.

The reciprocity between researcher and teachers was intended to work in two ways. The first was at the level of the interrogation of the data in order to examine discursive production, and the second an examination of the reciprocity between theory and data. Researcher and teachers examined the transcripts at each stage. The researcher transcribed the transcripts and the teachers read and checked them. The researcher analysed the transcripts in terms of the discourses used by the students and the dominant pedagogical discourses of the teachers. The discursive productions of the researcher were discussed with the teachers and the teachers co-authored the chapter on their pedagogical positions and made suggestions for other parts of the thesis text. The purpose of the reciprocity was to enable mutual understandings for researcher and teachers and the extension of knowledge. A similar reciprocal process with the students in the class would also reveal other levels of understanding.

In order to face the issue of false consciousness, which is, according to Lather, after Gramsci (1971) 'the denial of how our common sense ways of looking at the world are permeated with meanings that sustain our disempowerment' (Lather, 1991:59), the involvement of the teachers at all stages of the research is necessary. The teachers were involved after the data gathering level in the construction of the grounded theory and the interpretation of the data. They were particularly involved in the interpretation of the pedagogical data. Their involvement was dialectical and mutually negotiated. The interviews with the teachers were similarly dialectical and reciprocal with the researcher using interactive self-disclosure to encourage the reciprocity. As both teachers were well known to the researcher over a long period of time, the reciprocity was mutually informing though not necessarily without anguish, especially at the level of the personal. The female teacher wanted to 'take the blame' for student responses so that the move to examining discursive positioning, rather than individual intentions which might be labelled psychological, was helpful.

It was also one of the intentions of the research to build a reciprocity between the data and the theory, after Lather (1991:62). The use of grounded theory was intended to generate discursive positionings in a classroom which were informed by a priori theoretical frameworks but not contained and limited by the theory. It was not the intention to reject theories which informed the research but to add to them. In this case poststructuralist feminist theory, pedagogical theory and theories of discourse analysis informed the research process with the view to arguing the relationship between pedagogy and student positioning. An examination of this relationship was intended to open spaces for transformative change and alternative subject positions, unlike the gendered ones shown in the transcript at the beginning of this chapter and earlier chapters.

The use of theory informed the research design and analysis for both researcher and teachers. Pedagogical theory helped the teachers to analyse their pedagogical discourses, question them, explain them, explore the difficulties of changing them

and move to a position where they were willing to add to theory by suggesting alternative pedagogical moves. The reciprocity developed added to theory in a way which was useful to the participants.

The coding processes of grounded theory, the generation of the discourses and the analysis of them were submitted to the teachers for their scrutiny, comment and negotiation of meanings. The discussions involved theoretical exchange, a collaborative theorising 'at the heart of research which both advances emancipatory theory and empowers the researched' (Lather, 1991:64). The meanings were negotiated among researcher, teachers, theory and data and re-evaluation took place. The negotiations were not always easy. At stages in the interviews and discussions both teachers wanted to affirm or validate their practice rather than questioning it. In their interviews they made comments like, 'With twenty-six students in the class there is no option' or 'I take the blame'. Through the process of the discussions, however, they were able to see other pedagogical possibilities or confirm their own.

A process of triangulation was used to test and confirm the data (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). While it was the transcripts of teacher/student interaction which formed the basis for the generation of dominant discourses of the classroom, other methods of data collection, student writing, teacher interviews, the researcher's journal and theory were used to seek both affirmation and divergence (Lather, 1991:67).

Construct validity was used to corroborate existing theories of gender production in English classrooms and to extend it by arguing a stronger relationship between pedagogy and discursive positioning. In the generation of the dominant classroom discourses the assumptions of the researcher were challenged by the transcript data. Some of the assumptions were confirmed while others were not. For example, it was assumed from the experience of participating with the students in their engagement with narrative texts that the boys 'believed that their interpretations of the text and the world are evident and that others share them and that they competed for authority with the text to which they have not assented, that they operated in hierarchies of power and acted as if they have authority'. These assumptions were not supported by this particular transcript evidence. It was important that the discourses produced by the researcher, as taken up by the students, operated in the classroom and were not the invention of the researcher. The interactive process with the teachers in the coding process allowed for the constant interrogation of the data by both researcher and teachers.

An important part of the research for the researcher was that the teachers were able to agree, after discussion and emerging analysis that the research had validity, the kind of 'face validity' of Kidder, who contends that 'research with face validity provides a 'click of recognition' and a 'yes, of course', instead of a 'yes, but experience' (Kidder, in Lather, 1991b:67). The process of this research was not as

simple as this formulation but as the analysis progressed the teachers came closer to such a formulation.

The self-reflexivity of both researcher and teachers in the interactive process eventually had the effect of transforming the ways in which the teachers thought about their pedagogy and, for one of the teachers, energised her to change both her pedagogy and eventually career direction. This process as part of praxis oriented research is termed by Lather as catalytic validity after Reason and Rowan, in Lather (1991b:68). Its explicit intention is to include the respondents in the research process so that there is the potential for greater understanding of the situation with the view to transformation. In this sense it is both praxis oriented and advocacy research which seeks alternative pedagogies.

3.2 Pilot Project

3.2.1 Informing the Research

Analysis during data collection lets the field worker cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new – often better quality – data; it can be a healthy corrective for built in blind spots; and it makes analysis an on going lively enterprise that is linked to the energising effects of fieldwork (Miles & Huberman, 1984:49).

The approach to the collection of the texts for this research was developed in a pilot project conducted in a Grade Six in a local primary school in 1993. The class was visited daily for two terms for the hour and a half during which a narrative was read to the children and discussed with them. Because it was the response of the students to the texts which was under examination as well as the influence of the teacher on the responses, it was important to record in exact detail everything the students and the teacher said. Transcription involves considerable time and effort and can be very expensive. It was decided that all the transcripts needed to be available for analysis rather than using a selective process. All that was said was relevant for analysis and needed to be recorded. It was selective in the sense that the transcriptions were limited to the work done with one class over two terms on three narrative texts (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:30).

The approach used in the pilot study indicated that it is possible for analysis to be going on while the data was being collected. The ongoing analysis has several advantages. It is possible to see gaps in the material and to extend the collection. A gap revealed in the pilot study was the lack of children's writing to supplement the shared talk. Writing in response to narrative texts often reveals insights and opinions that the children are reluctant to reveal in shared talk. This gap was

remedied in the subsequent research. The ongoing analysis enabled reflection both on the process of the collection, the texts to be collected and on the texts themselves.

3.2.2 Modifications

The pilot study revealed the necessity to observe closely and to record as accurately as possible the student/teacher talk. It also indicated that other sources of student opinion would be helpful for the analysis. It was decided that samples of student writing could give alternative versions of student responses to narrative text. It also indicated that it might be interesting to work with older students in that they might have more sophisticated and thoughtful responses to the texts and that their added experience and maturity might elicit more interesting and provocative responses.

3.3 Collection of Textual Data

3.3.1 Observation and recording

The texts were collected by the researcher as part of the ethnographic research. As a participant observer it was possible to capture some of the immediacy of the classroom events in order to understand more fully the complexity of both the texts and the context. The researcher participated in the discussion if asked for an opinion and talked readily with the students before and after the lesson; however, the participation was deliberately kept to a minimum in order that the situation would most closely resemble what would normally occur. The researcher wrote transcripts of each class. These were written in front of the students who were aware of what was being written. Students were asked to repeat comments so that the transcription was as accurate as possible. Those students who were interested read parts of the transcripts. Occasionally one of the students helped in the writing of the transcripts. The sessions were tape-recorded so that the researcher could complete and revise the transcripts after the class. The collected texts were intended to provide material for close scrutiny and to help fill the gaps when there are the inevitable lapses of memory over time. The transcripts did not record in detail either the intonation or the body language so a personal journal was used for that purpose (Guba & Lincoln, 1981:193). This method necessarily involves surveillance with the disadvantages of power differentials which can alter the processes (Foucault, 1977a, 1980a).

In the case of this study, the teachers and the students were willing participants, the researcher became part of the classroom, obvious but unobtrusive. Initially the students were interested in the researcher but they soon accepted or tolerated her position. They were told what was being observed and they were willing to

participate in the collection of texts. Anonymity was assured and official approval sought and obtained. The teachers were consulted about the transcripts but the students were not.

3.3.2 Transcripts

The method used to record the transcripts was complex. A tape recorder does not pick up everything which is said in a whole class discussion and it was too expensive to put a microphone on each of the children and the teacher. Video recordings are even more prohibitively expensive, intrusive and invite exaggerated performativity. The preliminary study revealed the necessity for close observation and the careful collection of material. So a compromise was reached. A handwritten transcript was made on each visit to the classroom and each session was taped. Immediately after the session the researcher listened to the tapes and rectified any omissions and corrected errors. The advantages of the tape recordings are that they enabled the researcher to listen repeatedly to the tapes in order to confirm meanings and interpretation. The tapes provide a permanent record. The disadvantage of this method is that the written transcript does not record either the intonation or the body language, aspects which are also difficult to pick up on a tape recording. After the transcripts were finalised they were typed and checked by both the teachers and researcher.

3.3.3 Journal

A personal journal was written by the researcher. The method was used in the pilot study and proved successful. Close observation and careful recording was necessary to obtain the quality of material necessary for analysis. The journal was written as soon after the class as possible in order that the memories were as fresh as possible. The journal was anecdotal, impressionistic and personal and did not attempt to replicate the same material as the transcripts. It tried to reconstruct those moments which were of significance in the context of the discussion but which might not have been so evident in the transcripts. The anecdotes were reconstructed after the event, a precarious process because it is often difficult to remember clearly and capture accurately and cogently the power of the memory or, indeed, the point of it. This proved a powerful way of recording those moments in the conversation which appear fleeting in the transcripts but which were so pervasive in the context of meaning. Also reconstructed in the journal was the intensity of some of the intonations and significant body language. The journal was used not only as a reconstruction of the insights gained and an alternative textual reconstruction of the lived experience but to identify themes and make connections that might otherwise not be made. The journal enabled the intensity of a sequence to be reconstructed in a way that is not evident in the transcripts. The journal contains 'reflective accounts of human experiences that are of phenomenological value' (Van Manen, 1990:73). Reconstructions of conversations with the teachers, both formal and informal, were included. Like all other texts, the journal is seen as partial and perspectival. The journal contributes to the triangulation of the data

and was used to establish 'data worthiness' (Lather, 1991a:66). Triangulation is achieved not only through the collection and readings of multiple data sources; the researcher consciously uses 'designs which seek counter patterns as well as convergence' (Lather, 1991a:67).

3.3.4 Students' Writing

The students' writing in response to the texts was collected as an alternative response to the talk as recorded in the transcripts. During the discussions on narrative text it became evident that there were dominant and powerful gendered voices, particularly on the part of the boys. The students' writing, which was more private, was shared with the teacher for the purposes of evaluation and assessment and revealed attitudes which were not evident in the classroom talk. It was photocopied and became part of the research collections. The writing which was collected consisted of every piece completed in terms two and three in response to the three texts. The students' writing was called 'personal journal writing', a form of writing in which the students were encouraged to express with honesty their feelings about the narrative texts. Within the journal the students were sometimes asked to answer questions asked by the teacher but they were encouraged to respond as they would in a journal entry, honestly and freely. The teachers set the writing tasks. The students' writing was used to inform the more detailed analysis of the transcripts.

3.3.5 Interviews

The teachers were interviewed in order to compare the results of the coding processes of the pedagogy with what they stated were their pedagogical intentions. The interviews were deliberately unstructured but the teachers were aware that they were to be about the research in which they had participated. They were told that the purpose of the interview was to investigate their purposes when they were teaching literature.

In each case the interviews lasted an hour and a half. The topic was introduced briefly and the teachers reminded of the previously agreed area of discussion. In both cases the teachers spoke for almost the entire time about their pedagogical purposes. They were both committed to their teaching and interested in what they were doing. They were proud of their achievements and their philosophies and pleased to talk about them. They were relaxed and honest, each teacher exploring what she/he thought they were doing when they were engaged in the act of teaching literature. The teachers were encouraged to talk, to explore their ideas, attitudes and purposes with as little interference as possible. Most of the questions were linguistically open-ended with the recognition that the questions could be discursively directing. The purpose of this method was to encourage the teachers to answer in their own terms and interpret the questions in the way they wanted. Some of the questions required clarification and amplification, others

asked that the teacher justify a comment, make an evaluation or give examples. Because of the familiarity which existed between the teachers and researcher the unstructured interview was appropriate. It is acknowledged that it was difficult for the teachers not to be influenced by their assumptions about the purpose of the research. The interviews were taped and notes were taken. The tapes were transcribed, the transcripts coded and compared with the transcripts. The interviews were followed by many discussions with each of the teachers as they engaged with the data.

3.4 Analysis of Teacher/Student Interaction

3.4.1 Grounded Theory

Since interest-free knowledge is logically impossible, we should feel free to substitute explicit interests for implicit ones (Reinhartz, in Lather, 1991a:50).

In this analysis a grounded theory approach was used to interpret the transcripts and produce a set of discourses which were the dominant ones used in the classroom in response to the narrative texts. It was developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to the development of the discourses. Both teachers were involved in the verification process (Strauss, & Corbin, 1990:23). The empirical work is intended to operate within the context of developing the discourses with the intention of challenging existing discursive positioning and opening alternative discursive positions. Although in grounded theory, building new theory follows from data rather than preceding it (Lather, 1991a:55), the thesis recognises that existing theory illuminates the lived experience of a classroom and that theory is illuminated by the participants. It also recognises the importance of the researcher in the process.

The search is for theory which grows out of context-embedded data, not in a way that automatically rejects a priori theory, but in a way that keeps preconceptions from distorting the logic evidence (Lather, 1991a:62).

Coding a text or lived experience thematically by interpreting its meaning is a process of constructing meaning (Van Manen, 1990:78). The use of a thematic approach for coding the data is useful because it allows material to be probed and re-probed for a range of possible meanings unconstrained by a tighter formulation. For example, in this study the researcher and teachers observed that often the boys appeared to be resistant to a discussion of a text. They appeared to demonstrate their resistance in a number of ways, either verbal, 'I don't want to read this book', or by physical acts like turning their backs on the teacher or placing the book face down on the desk. Thus an initial theme became, 'Often refuse to engage with text as part of their attitude towards the text'. Through the application of the theme to the transcripts it was possible to find out how many times either boys or girls refused to engage with the text. Also, if there were no examples of this theme in

the transcripts, it was possible to see if the researcher's and teachers' assumption was inaccurate.

The approach used was both quantitative and qualitative. A quantitative approach was used to as part of the coding process. The empirical work was intended to work within the context of theory building operating within grounded theory. A qualitative research approach, which interrogated and interpreted discourses produced through pedagogical practices and response to text, was also used (Abbott-Chapman, 1993). It was used to uncover and interpret the complexity of the relationships between pedagogy and gender. It was used to gain fresh slants on processes about which much has been theorised. Qualitative methods can construct intricate readings of a phenomena (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:19). A qualitative approach allows examination of the context – the social, cultural and political attitudes and values which impact on the understanding of a particular site and for their 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973:14).

The purpose of grounded theory is to specify the conditions that give rise to specific sets of action/interaction pertaining to a phenomenon and the resulting consequences. It is generalizable to those specific circumstances only (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:251). Rather than a large scale study, this research looks closely, acknowledging that it is impossible to make generalisations from a particular circumstance. The purpose of the research is to investigate the conditions which exist in a particular context and the environment which might give rise to specified sets of action and to suggest transformative action. What is generalizable, is to the specific circumstances which were examined. Given a similar theoretical perspective and similar conditions, however, another researcher should be able to come up with similar theoretical explanations.

Despite the range of texts collected, none of them, singly or in combination, can possibly reflect exactly the intensity of the lived experience. Each of them is a construction, a reconstruction, a re-reading, a transformation of those experiences. Hence the need for intensive reflection on the material and interim interpretations of it. The process formulates 'self corrective techniques to check the credibility of the data and to minimise distorting bias' (Lather, 1991a:66).

Thick description used by Geertz (1973) and described by Guba and Lincoln (1981) as a method which involves minute, detailed description of what is being investigated is the approach used in this thesis. This study uses such description which includes the context, the people involved, as well as the interpretation of the data in terms of cultural attitudes and values. Verbatim quotations are included as an important part of the writing. Quotations from the participants involved in the study can convey more accurately than the word of the researcher the immediacy of the events and meanings of those involved. The quotations can represent both intended and the non-intended meanings. The researcher used the words of others as support for and illustrative of the readings. They can be in the

text to speak for themselves (Fetterman, 1989). The interactive reflexivity of researcher and teachers was an important part of this process.

3.4.2 Open Coding

In the process of open coding, themes are identified (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:74). Based on the time spent in the classroom as a participant observer, a list of preliminary themes was constructed by the researcher and teachers. The themes were related to the processes the students appeared to use when engaged in discussion of narrative texts in the classroom and the meanings they constructed.

It was assumed that the processes and the meanings produced were gendered and that the pedagogical purposes of the teachers affirmed gendered readings. The intention of the research was to examine the processes through which gender was reproduced in a classroom context and the discourses used to reproduce gender. The initial themes included these assumptions. For example, one of the most important observations was that the girls engaged in the text much more readily than the boys. This became one theme labelled, 'interact with the text much more'. A series of themes, several for the boys and several for the girls, were identified by the researcher.

The collected texts were closely investigated in order to construct themes relevant to the questions of how students make meaning from texts, in what ways these meanings are gendered and the role of the pedagogical purposes in producing these readings. The first step was to construct some of the processes and meanings which seemed to exist when students engaged with a narrative text. A number of processes which were gender specific were constructed.

The initial themes were drawn up by the researcher and shared with the teachers. The initial themes were revised in light of the discussions until they represented what happened in the classroom. The initial themes, based on the researcher's and teachers' assumptions, are represented in the following lists.

INITIAL MALE THEMES

- 1 divert from the text to discuss what they think about the issues that they note
- 2 often refuse to engage with the text as part of their attitude towards the text
- 3 do not empathise with the characters
- 4 do not see characters as constructions
- 5 believe that they can act upon the world and change it
- 6 keep outside the text
- 7 use the text to classify in a rigid way and find answers
- 8 show contempt for the opinions of girls
- 9 believe that their interpretations of the text and the world are evident and that others share them
- 10 they become surprised and bored when this is not the case
- 11 not concerned about generating their own meanings, to speculate, predict, see possibilities, to propound suppositions, in the same way as the girls
- 12 like the factual and resist speculation, limited anticipatory frames
- 13 operate in hierarchies of power, boys act as if they have authority
- 14 judgmental
- 15 practical
- 16 the first coherence is the coherence
- 17 comparisons more likely with TV

INITIAL FEMALE THEMES

- 1 identify, participate, empathise with plot, character and the world as if they are real
- 2 they are part of the narrative
- 3 investigate the world of the text from the outside
- 4 do not see they can act upon the world
- 5 interact with the text much more, see the subtleties of construction of the text
- 6 more willing than the boys to empathise, speculate and elaborate
- 7 show respect for the opinions of boys and of each other
- 8 happy with the discourse of the individual and individual difference
- 9 reflective, willing to note assumptions
- 10 patient and conscientious readers willing to defer gratification
- 11 theoretical/ideological readers as opposed to practical ones
- 12 the first coherence is not the only coherence
- 13 make comparisons with other narrative texts

Initially there were seventeen male themes for the boys' responses and thirteen female themes for the girls' responses. After discussion of the context, readings of the transcripts and the students' writing and a careful examination of the way the themes were worded, the initial themes were reduced to twenty, ten for the boys and ten for the girls. The reduction was not an attempt to constrain the themes but to produce consistent and not overlapping themes.

Each of the themes was applied first to the transcripts. The transcripts were interrogated many times and each sentence or sentence cluster was identified as belonging to one or more of the previously identified themes. The responses to the themes were counted, some occurring with much more frequency than others. As they were counted they were refined. For instance, it became evident that the code labelled 'empathic' could be widened to include the notion of talking about the characters in the fiction as if they were real. There was evidence that all students used all the reading processes identified, but it was evident that both boys and girls preferred a certain style of engagement with the text.

3.4.3 Axial Coding

The next process is axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:114). In this process the themes were verified and categories were developed further through the consideration of other contributing factors. For example, the context was considered, as well as some of the causal factors which gave rise to the phenomenon. Additional properties for the categories were discovered which changed or expanded each of them. In this case the contextual issues included aspects like the influence of the pedagogical purposes and practices of the teacher on the readings which were possible in the classroom, the nature and status of the teaching of literature in the school, the school itself and the texts chosen. The categories were analysed.

3.4.4 Selective Coding

Finally a process of selective coding took place (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:142) in which six discourses were constructed through the readings of the researcher. The selective coding was part of the interpretation. The discourses were developed and their implications explored. The researcher in consultation with the teachers sought to find patterns, which enabled the data to be constructed into discourses. The grouping was achieved by asking questions of the data and making comparisons. From the initial twenty themes and the speculations about the ways in which students engaged with and made meaning from text in the classroom, eighteen categories were constructed with the remaining themes as subsidiary and supporting. The eighteen categories were reconstructed into six discourses which relate to a theory of gender production and its relationship to pedagogical practices. The six discourses were analysed. These processes are described in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4

Textual Positioning

Introduction

Boy	I will feel really deceived if it is not the girl on the cover.
Girl	I liked it. It's real, it's true. It's what we will be going through in a couple of years at HSC and all that.

These two responses, one from a boy and one from a girl, taken from different parts of the transcripts are both to the narrative text, *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992). The boy's comment is part of a conversation about whether or not the photograph of a young woman on the front cover of the book is of the character, Josephine Alibrandi. He indicates that he is sure that it is and if it is not then he will be 'really deceived'. The girl's response sees the narrative text as 'real' and 'true'. It is likely that both responses see narrative texts as mimetic, duplicating a reality which exists (Derrida, 1978, 1981a). These responses, like those of most of the students, expect that narrative texts will reflect a pre-given reality and the dominant classroom pedagogy encourages and rarely questions this reader positioning.

In the analysis of the narrative texts, the text as fictional genre, is not analysed in terms of plot, character, themes or linguistic features. Rather the texts are examined in terms of how they potentially position readers to make meaning and how the readers take up the reading positions in relation to the pedagogy used. This examination is one reading of how students in the intersection with narrative text and pedagogy take up reading positions. It examines dominant and privileged readings of narrative texts and acknowledges that there are alternative ways of reading those texts.

This chapter, as a first reading of the data in a search for theory which grows out of 'context-embedded data' (Lather, 1991a:62), describes the processes involved in the selection of texts. It is part of the examination of the relationship between gendered subjectivity, pedagogy and the reading of narrative texts. It focuses on narrative texts and how they position readers in the reproduction of gendered subjectivities. The reading of each narrative text is described separately. The description includes textual constructions of femininity and masculinity, reading positions offered through the intersection of pedagogical discourse and text, and

positions the students take towards each of the texts. The events of the classroom are reconstructed as the students and teacher discuss three narrative texts.

4.1 Textual Constructions of Gender

4.1.1 Making Meaning from Texts

Each of the narrative texts constructs or figures gender differently. Meanings of narrative texts, according to Cranny-Francis, are located in the semiotic practices of the texts and reading practices which construct particular meanings in texts (1992:28).

There is no single unified position offered either by texts to girls and boys or to women and men. While there are simple messages offered by these texts about the construction of femininity and masculinity, the way that readers take up the positions are complex. As Gilbert claims, analyses of reading materials indicates that character construction is limited and gendered (1995:5). As she says, the occupation of characters is stereotypical, the ways characters are described is gendered and male characters dominate in stories of action (Gilbert, 1995:5). Yet how readers make meanings from texts and the subject positions they take up depend on the reading practices they have available to them. Just as the texts are polysemic, the possibilities for making meaning are multiple (Davies, 1989, 1993, Gilbert, 1995). It is the different readings, those offered by the texts, those made available through the intersection of text and pedagogical discourses and those made by the students, which are documented, observed and examined in this research.

4.1.2 How Texts Offer Reading Positions

Narrative texts can be read as ideological constructions, whose readings rely on knowledge of culturally specific patterns of social action, motivations, behaviours and beliefs (Kress, 1995:36, after Barthes, 1977a,b,c; Belsey, 1980; Derrida, 1978; White, 1980, 1984). The construction of narrative texts, like other texts, is socially constrained and deeply implicated with ideological practices. As Kress suggests 'Reading as reconstruction of the text is an ideological activity' (1995:42). Narratives are culturally specific and governed in both form and content by a system of rules. The reading of a text, as Cranny-Francis claims, depends upon how the structure of the text and the semiotic practices, indicate how it should be read and upon the experience and knowledge, the reading practices, that the readers bring to the text (1992:181). How the text is interpreted, the meanings that are possible to gain from it, as Luke asserts, is as a result of a complex interaction between reader, text and pedagogical practice (1988:156).

Narrative texts, like other texts, construct images which position textual characters with particular forms of femininity and masculinity, characters who think, act and dress in certain ways. Such textual constructions, according to Cranny-Francis, have a powerful normative effect on readers, sanctioning ways of being which are culturally, socially and politically endorsed (1992:5). Many narrative texts, such as the ones selected for this research, construct versions of femininity and masculinity which support a patriarchal order and position their readers to read in certain ways (Cranny-Francis, 1992:2). While there are qualities of femininity such as sensitivity, passivity, dependence, supportiveness, nurturance, which constitute the feminine sexual and gender identity in patriarchy, not all characters in narrative texts are constructed to accept that positioning, just as not all female readers will accept a femininity which has these characteristics (Cranny-Francis, 1992:8). But it is the way that patriarchal discourse positions the feminine which has implications for the positions texts open up for readers. The same process exists for the constitution of the masculine, qualities of which are expected to be those of intelligence, independence, ambition, drive, power and domination, qualities which are the opposite of the feminine (Cranny-Francis, 1992:7). If texts are read 'in the traditionally 'correct' manner' such as that expected by the Cultural Heritage and the Personal Response pedagogical approaches, then the reader is disadvantaged (Cranny-Francis, 1992:5). Cranny-Francis suggests that 'a transparent or naturalised reading disadvantages not only women but also men' (1992:5). In a similar way classroom practices naturalise unequal linguistic access, according to Gilbert, and rather than encouraging individual difference blur it (1995:5).

The narrative text 'encodes and presents a set of possibilities for the reader' (Kress, 1995:40). For Kress, the textual reading position is the positioning constructed for the reader so that the reader accepts the text which seems 'natural and plausible, uncontentious' (1985:40). The text is constructed to offer reading positions to readers and the readers can accept or reject the reading positions available. According to Kress, the best reader is one who is able to see the constructedness of the text and of the reader positions offered but who at the same time is a critically resistant reader 'who can reconstruct the text in a manner useful to herself or himself' (1985:40). Of the three pedagogical discourses explored in Chapter 2, Cultural Heritage, Personal Response and Critical Theory, it is only the third, which offers potential for the development of the critically resistant reader, described by Kress (1995:40).

The reading positions constructed by the text are powerful discursive practices, according to Cranny-Francis (1992:185). She suggests that narrative texts are constructed so that the events appear to work out logically and that this only happens when texts are read as reflections of the discourses of which they are a part (Cranny-Francis, 1992:185). For instance, she claims, 'a sexist narrative of conquest, for example, only makes sense when read as a construction of patriarchal discourse' (Cranny-Francis, 1992:185). Such a text is naturalised and its exclusions are rendered invisible. 'Female sexuality and non-patriarchal masculine

sexuality' will be invisible (Cranny Francis, 1993:185). Some readers will find this text easy to read while others will not. The feminist critic, for instance, is likely to find the text problematic, will 'identify the patriarchal discourse which has constructed this narrative and then go on to deconstruct this discourse, locating the voices silenced by the narrative' (Cranny-Francis, 1992:185).

Each of the three narrative texts selected for the purpose of the research offers a range of reading positions for the students, who accepted some of them and rejected others. The process of taking up the subject positions offered by the text, as Belsey claims, 'is not an inevitable one' (1980:69). As she claims, texts do not determine the ways in which they are read. This was the case in the classroom where the research took place. The students took up different subject positions depending on the discourses they had available or they chose to take up and they produced a range of readings not all as ideal readers of the texts. The ideal reader is one who takes up the position of 'autonomous subject' (Belsey, 1980:83) and accepts the obviousness of the textual ideology. There were some readers who refused to accept this position, either because they refused to accept the ideology (Belsey, 1980:83) or because they positioned themselves tactically and gained the meanings from the texts that they wanted to gain (Cranny-Francis, 1994:11).

4.2 Selection of Texts

4.2.1 Intentions

This chapter explores how texts position readers and how readers take up positions offered to them as part of the grounded theory approach. The initial intention was to select texts which both girls and boys would willingly read. Difficulties emerged because the category of text selected was to be that suggested by Kress as 'the aesthetically valued (and valuable) text' (1995:34). It would have been much easier to select texts from popular culture but not so easy when the text selected was to come from the Australian prize-winning lists which have implied aesthetic value and are culturally important in the classroom context. The teachers were free to select whatever narrative texts they wanted and for whatever purposes they decided and were not constrained by curriculum.

The initial intention of the teachers was for the readers to find some enjoyment in the text, the sort of pleasure which reader response theory suggests comes from being able to locate oneself in the text, to identify with or be sympathetic to the characters, to be able to link with the experiences and gain emotional satisfaction from the texts and to understand their underlying ideologies (Sarland, 1991:94). It was recognised that there is a tension between texts which are unproblematically pleasurable and the aesthetically valued texts (Cranny-Francis, 1994:19). The suggestion by Cranny-Francis that any text which is seen as pleasurable is one

which is considered not valuable and lesser than a text which is considered to have 'critical worth' (1994:19) was one which both teachers endorsed. Cranny-Francis claims that most textual consumption is pleasurable, but that 'certain kinds of pleasure have been elevated above others' (1994:20).

In order to examine closely how texts position readers it was intended to select a text which would appeal to the girls, one which would appeal to the boys and one which would have appeal for both. Teachers are concerned in their selection of narrative texts for the classroom that the texts might be considered 'girls texts' and the boys will not participate (Gilbert, 1994). They assume that books for boys need to have boys or men as the chief protagonists and that they cannot include issues of relationships, romance or female sexuality (Patterson & Lee, 1993). For the purpose of this research it did not prove difficult to find a text which the girls would willingly read but it was difficult to find narrative texts from the Australian prize-winning or short-listed texts which either the boys would willingly read or would appeal to both girls and boys. It proved very difficult to find aesthetically valued texts which clearly positioned themselves as either boys' texts or as texts which would appeal to both girls and boys.

4.2 2 Girls' Texts

The only text which did not prove difficult to select was the one which the girls would willingly read. *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992) has many characteristics which make it particularly appealing to girls, in terms of popular notions of gendered identities, a teenage girl as the central character, romance as the central theme with contributing themes of ethnicity, class, illegitimacy, suicide, sexuality, ambition and success. Girls are usually willing to read anything that is offered to them in the classroom, even texts which have been chosen with the boys in mind but that the boys are not so willing to do this (Patterson & Lee, 1993).

4.2.3 Boys' Texts

What became obvious in selecting the prize-winning texts was that there were few books which seemed to have the characteristics which are appealing to most of the boys. There are texts which some boys enjoy, but while *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992) seemed a suitable choice for the girls, there was not such a text from Australian prize-winning lists for the boys or indeed for both boys and girls. What emerged from the discussion of the texts with the teachers involved in the research, was that although many prize-winning texts have male characters which are central to the action and have adventure, even violence, they usually present relationships, difficulties of relationships and personal problems through the consciousness of the narrator.

The books that many boys claim to like are those which are more direct in their view (Sarland, 1991:73). The events are presented unmediated as if from an invisible story teller and are not diffused by the mediation of the consciousness of one or more of the characters. There is plenty of action, the action springs from the actions of an appealing and masculine character and there is not too much reflection on the motivation of the characters. The story usually comes to a satisfactory conclusion and the events are rounded off with the male character winning. Many boys claim to like stories where lots is happening told in a language which is accessible (Sarland, 1991:70). Finally, through a process of negotiation, it was decided that the second text, the one closest to answering the claims about texts which boys like to read, was *Dougy* (Moloney, 1993).

4.2.4 Text for Girls and Boys

Peter (Walker, 1991) was selected as the text which might appeal to both girls and boys. Although this text has a boy as its central character, it explores sexuality through the consciousness of the male character, a narrative construction which has some appeal for many female readers. Because it explores male and female sexuality both teachers and researcher thought that it would have some appeal to both girls and boys.

4.2.5 Final Selection of Texts

Both teachers had much experience with working with students and texts and they found it difficult to suggest prize-winning texts which the students would willingly read. The students were not involved in the debate and it might have been valuable if they had been. Students are too often excluded from the selection process and their responses to the texts may reflect this exclusion. In this case, however, the constraints of time and the difficulty of obtaining the books were inhibiting factors in involving the students in the choice.

It was decided as part of the collaborative process of teachers and researcher in the research that it was the responses of female and male students to the texts which were to be interrogated, rather than the texts themselves. It is recognised, however, that the texts raised issues which were crucial in the readings of the students. The two teachers involved agreed to give all the allotted time in the subject English to the task of reading the texts until they had been read. They agreed that the best method for them was to read aloud the text to the class pausing to ask questions or to seek questioning where they felt it appropriate. They occasionally used group work for discussion which was reported back to the rest of the class and sometimes individuals in the class were asked to read aloud. There was much objection to this so it was the teacher who usually read the text to the students. There was very little silent reading and the class did not take the books home to read overnight although some of the students borrowed the books and read them avidly and quickly.

4.2.6 Order of Reading the Texts

The order of reading the texts was briefly discussed and it was felt by the teachers that the order did not matter. As the school had ordered new sets of books for the research it was decided that the first book to arrive would be the one which was read first. This book was *Peter* (Walker, 1991). The order in which the books was read was found to be influential in determining the responses of the students. The reaction to *Peter* was not what was expected and this was very powerful in determining the agenda of what was to follow. Other research might vary the order of the reading of the narrative texts and the results might differ due to the complexity of the social, cultural and political context set up through the interactions of students, teachers and texts.

4.2.7 Views of Narrative Texts

The view of the narrative text which was accepted by both teachers and students was part of the Cultural Heritage pedagogical discourse. It assumed that the text was a creative and truthful representation of reality, a mimetic quality (Derrida, 1978), that it represented an aspect of human truth, written by an author whose creative unconsciousness inspired the work. The narrative text, especially the aesthetically valued text, was accepted as a work of originality and individuality, written in a language which is rich, original and creative, free from the restrictions and tiredness of the cliché and forged afresh from the creative spirit of the author. Neither the teachers nor the students treated the text as if it was constructed, a social convention which privileges certain ideological practices. It was assumed that the text represented truths about the human condition. They saw the texts, as Cranny-Francis suggests, as representations of the real, 'whether as naturalistic recreations of the real or as texts that focus on ideas or issues or emotions as fundamental to the real' (1988:160). The texts reproduced for both the students and teacher what they saw as real.

Both teachers and students accepted that the text existed outside the readers' interpretations of it and that response to the text was an interactive process between reader and text. For them Rosenblatt's notion of reading as being a 'transaction' between reader and text was crucial (1976, 1978). Both teachers' and students' experience of the texts was intimately linked with the strategies they had learned explicitly or implicitly from the interpretative community of which they are part. The teachers' discourses of narrative texts also assumed that the students' responses to the texts were to be honest, authentic, free and unmediated.

Each of the three texts construct relationships as heterosexual and relationships are based on differences of power between the characters. The texts generated a degree of anxiety or tension around issues of sexuality, race, class and ethnicity.

They presented a range of complex social issues to which the students responded in gendered ways.

4.3 Reading Text One

4.3.1 Textual Construction of Femininity and Masculinity in *Peter* (Walker, 1991)

Peter (Walker, 1991) is a narrative text which constructs events in the life of a fifteen-year-old boy who lives with his divorced mother, a nurse, and his older brother, a university student. Peter is at first positioned by the text as an ordinary teenage boy, who is interested in trail bike riding, photography and girls and who happens to be good at English. He is constructed as a reflective and intelligent teenage boy who dislikes some of the attitudes and values of his peer group, particularly those towards violence and sex. When he meets his older brother's friend, who is homosexual and is attracted to him, he begins to think that he too might be homosexual. The narrative constructs, through the consciousness of the character, Peter, the dilemmas he experiences facing his sexuality. The use of the first person as narrator is an important narrative device for this text. The selection of a first person narrator has the potential effect of distancing the author from the ideology of the text and reducing a possible impositional didacticism or to gain the reader's sympathy for the character who is narrating the story.

A version of a 'normative image of masculinity which is not only patriarchal but also bourgeois, Anglocentric and ageist' (Cranny-Francis, 1992:72) is the one which is privileged in this narrative. The main male character, Peter, in the opening of the text is constructed as a typical teenage male adolescent, resentful of adults who do not understand what it is to be young and with a hatred of authority as represented by Mrs Minslow, a cleaning person who wears floral, bangs about with her cleaning materials and invades Peter's bedroom unnecessarily.

The narrative constructs versions of white, middle-class masculinity which are authoritative and violent, which accepts the predatory sexuality of heterosexual masculinity for whom women are prized objects, for whom competition, especially over other males is central. The attractive male characters for many boys in *Peter* are the boys who ride the trail bikes, who are aggressive, violent and competitive; Peter's brother, who is independent and rational; Peter's friend, Tony, who has a predatory sexuality; and Peter's father, who is the symbol of male authority and power. Although Peter's father is constructed as unlikeable, he is the character who being white, middle-aged, fit and wealthy has access to power. He is the man who is 'constructed as powerful by others in society and deferred to automatically' (Cranny-Francis, 1992:89). He is competitive, fights evil – in this case, suggestions of homosexuality – and has achieved security and power. He is tough and hard. The privileged versions of masculinity which are constructed in *Peter* are similar to those described by Cranny-Francis, who suggests, 'In other

words, many fictions participate in the construction of masculinity as inherently violent, competitive, manipulative' (1992:87).

The text attempts to construct an alternative version of acceptable masculinity through her main character, Peter, and David, who is homosexual. Early in the text, Peter, as narrator, positions himself as good at things that are not generally considered masculine. He is intelligent, he is good at English and he likes photography, attributes that are considered 'highly unmasculine' (1991:10). It is Peter's father who owns the land the boys ride on and their use of it depends on their good behaviour.

The text constructs a version of homosexuality which is written as a heterosexual romance, with flirtation, tension and resolution, which cannot cope with diversity. The action of the narrative proves that in the end diversity is sameness. David, who is homosexual, has enough of the qualities of hegemonic masculinity for him to be acceptable. He is positioned as romantic hero in a heterosexual romance. He is seeking love, intimacy, relationship and not merely sex. He is constructed as rational, clever, authoritative, powerful, strong and interested in cars. As a textual character, David is constructed in a privileged position. He is perfect – handsome, intelligent, tolerant, kind and always caring. His character is more appropriate in another text. The character, Peter, in his attempts to come to terms with his sexuality, is positioned as a normal boy with normal urges and who wants the same qualities that David wants. The 'happily ever after' ending is that everything can be alright as Peter is not homosexual after all. The narrative normalises male positions, as long as the characters have universal qualities of kindness, generosity, strength, independence, rationality and cleverness, then their sexuality can be rendered invisible. The narrative does not construct difference as a proliferation of possible subject positions but as equal and same. Walker, the author, attempts to construct an alternative position for the character Peter but in doing so has located him in two contradictory discourses. In constructing him as sensitive and thoughtful, she positions him as feminine, yet she struggles in the early chapters to position him as thoroughly, hegemonically male. The enormous shift in the construction of the character of Peter is difficult for most young readers to accept. The text does not provide sufficient multiple positions for all the characters to make liberation for Peter possible. Although Walker attempts to do otherwise, she replicates patriarchal positioning of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities.

The textual construction of femininity in *Peter* is inextricably linked with the construction of masculinity, in which femininity is seen 'as the negative or other of the masculine' (Cranny-Francis, 1992:117). The feminine is almost invisible in the narrative but where it is present, it is stereotypical. The mother is constructed as a good woman, who is caring, understanding, nurturing, compliant and supportive. The cleaning woman is constructed to be unattractive, interfering and bossy. For young women there are two subject positions available, the good and the bad, or

the virgin and the whore. Gloria, as the whore is the sexual object: 'her long legs wrapped around each other and the little tie things at the sides of her shorts dangling down' (Walker, 1991:53). She is constructed as one of the 'tartlet-young chicks who hang around older boys and act sexy' (Walker, 1991:54). Sophie, as the good girl, is interesting and clever with beautiful hair and too much weight, the female who is understanding, loving, caring and who is capable of allaying male fears: 'her sphere is the emotional and the domestic' (Cranny-Francis, 1992:133).

The power the women have is in the domestic and through their sexuality. The mother in *Peter* has decision-making power in the home. She is the one who is constructed as willing to extend the meal when her divorced husband arrives unannounced, but it is he who makes the major decisions. Gloria, as tart, gains some power through her sexuality but she gains no respect from the male characters for doing so. Both the domestic and the sexual roles are exploitative. According to Cranny-Francis, 'Both feminine roles exploit male subjects. They exploit by their dishonesty and by their non-engagement' (1992:138). These women are constructed to accept their positioning in a patriarchy which naturalises unequal positions for women and men (Cranny-Francis, 1992:138). The constructions of masculinity and femininity in *Peter* which associate power with men and powerlessness with women, 'characterise all men as powerful and as victimisers, and all women as powerless and as victims' (Cranny-Francis, 1992:135). The text naturalises constructions of patriarchal masculinity and femininity as expressed in a patriarchal culture.

4.3.2 Reading Positions Offered Through the Intersection of Text and Pedagogical Discourse

The text and the pedagogical discourse through which the text is discussed makes available a range of reading positions for readers to adopt. The narrative *Peter* (Walker, 1991) offers contradictory reading positions. The first three chapters narrate surface events and emphasise action. They are told in a language which is colloquial, vigorously masculine and aggressive. The subsequent chapters shift the focus from an external social context to internal personal reflection. If one adopts a hegemonic masculine position towards the text at the beginning, then betrayal can be felt when the narration shifts to the inner and the personal. If one adopts a counter hegemonic reading position at the beginning of the reading, then there can be a feeling of exclusion from the beginning. If the reader feels excluded from the beginning, there is a possibility of inclusion later on, especially if the reader is female and interested in the reflection upon feelings. If the reader is male then the only counter hegemonic position to take is one of ambiguous sexuality or homosexuality and this is not an appealing position for most boys. Homosexuality is a problem in the novel and is connected with the identity and self-realisation of the central character, Peter.

Although a Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse informed the teachers' selection of the narrative texts, a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse was privileged in the class. It encouraged unmediated personal response. All positions taken towards the text had equal legitimacy and the dominant voices prevailed. There was no position to interrogate exclusions, omissions or marginalisations. The constructedness of the text was not made visible nor was the contractedness of reading positions. Because a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse sees texts as real and representations of reality, the response endorsed is one which sees the text as real and the responses to the reality presented. It is not possible in the discourse to recognise the constructedness of the text and how its construction creates versions of reality rather than representing them. The personal responses revealed the students' attitudes to textual events. They discussed the action as if it was real and not constructed. The only position for the reader was to endorse the uniqueness of the text, its view of reality and the opportunities it offered for personal response on these issues.

4.3.3 Student Positions to the Text

Most of the Grade Nine boys endorsed the view of hegemonic masculinity which is constructed in the text. They were visibly engaged, cheering for the tough boys of the group, the ones who had inscribed themselves as hegemonically masculine, either through their use of language, their clothes, their size, their competence on the bikes or their attitudes. Most of the girls accepted a different reading position. While the boys demonstrated their toughness by complying with the construction of tough masculinity as presented by the text, the girls accepted their exclusion, their invisibility, their position in a network of behaviours which position women as other. Both boys and girls accepted the position of compliant readers as suggested. Because they are readers who have access to the meaning making practices of the text and to contemporary reading practice, they accept the position the text offers and the textual constructions of the text. They do not challenge the discursive positioning constructed by the dominant reading practices.

The boys at first accepted the masculine position offered by the text and became willing participants in its reconstruction. The language of the first three chapters is masculine and colloquial. It positions the reader to take up a hegemonic masculine position. Most of the male students found the language thoroughly enjoyable, totally convincing and true to life. Most of the students appeared to enjoy the initial construction of the character, Peter, of his resistance to authority and his desire to escape.

As compliant readers, who did not challenge the discursive positioning constructed for them by the text, the boys accepted that aggression, violence, competition, toughness, independence and domination are qualities to admire and to acquire. The girls learned to accept a position of invisibility in the text, especially when male activities are prioritised.

Both boys and girls positioned themselves as enthusiastic responders to text at first, especially when it was read aloud by the teacher. Four students, three girls and one boy claimed the dominant positions in the classroom. Two students emerged as powerful forces in the classroom. They drew attention to themselves very quickly – Josh, dominating and pleasant, never quiet, determined to discuss his own agenda and Rebecca, assertive, strong with interesting responses. The presence of Josh was so dominating that it appeared that he controlled the agenda of the classroom. Only two of the girls contradicted him and tried to modify his assertions.

The boys positioned themselves with the hegemonic masculine male characters who did 'macho' things like pissing on trees, swearing, participating in dangerous activities and defying adult authority. The girls did not position themselves in the same way towards the story. When the teacher asked them to write a short story on 'What Happens Next?' in the narrative text, the talk in the class suggested that the girls positioned the story as a romance with Peter meeting a girl, doing well at school and becoming successful, while some of the boys muttered about their suspicion that Peter might turn out gay. Only one of the students, a girl, had read the text before and she agreed to write an alternative ending to the novel. The boys constructed the story as an action, adventure text.

The notion of the compliant reader underestimates the complexity of the reader's response to text. A singular compliance is unlikely and the reading position adopted by most readers shifts. As the class reading of *Peter* progressed, the students adopted different positions towards it.

Once the boys detected that the book included references to homosexuality they repositioned themselves towards the text. There were a number of reasons as to why they suspected Peter's supposed homosexuality. It was suggested by the blurb on the back cover. One of the boys had read the blurb, announcing it to the class, while others had read it into Chapter 3, 'Friday'. Perhaps through the writing they had done, which was to predict the rest of the story, they had looked more closely at the text and found hints and clues as to the potential homosexuality which might be there.

The resistance to a subject position which accepts homosexuality offered by the text was not in the form of a resistance to the constructedness of the text and the reading positions offered. Rather it was to the issues that the text raised and therefore might be more aptly described as a tactical reading. The resistance to the text was obvious. Several of the boys actively refused to look at the text. They turned the open book face down on the desk and sat with arms folded. They did not bother to hide the fact that they were not reading, in fact they made every effort to draw attention to the fact that they were not. They seem determined to

demonstrate a resistance to the text. They showed contempt and resentment as well as active resistance and affirmed the use of violence as a legitimate response to homosexuality.

The girls took up different subject positions towards the text. They maintained a more compliant reading, accepting a more sympathetic position to all the characters in the book, especially to Peter. They resisted the position of the boys, conveying disgust about the contemptuous attitudes of the boys towards homosexuality, which they saw as narrow and unfair. The boys, in the main, positioned themselves in opposition to the girls, ignored the criticism of the girls and refused to engage in a critical debate with them. They continued to refuse to read the book, to dismiss it and the issues it contains or to show disinterest. The resistance of the boys was not disinterested, nor was it critically aware of the constructedness of the text nor of the ideological positions it supported. The position the girls adopted was resistant to the position of the boys but was compliant to the positions the text offered.

By the conclusion of *Peter* many of the boys were further entrenched in hegemonic masculine subject positions. For them their readings of the text confirmed their previous attitudes both to the act of reading and to the issues in the book. Many of the girls were confirmed in their subject positions. They revealed more understanding and acceptance of positions which they did not necessarily hold for themselves and stated their belief in the right of the individual to choose their sexual preferences as long as they do not intrude on the rights of others. Their subject positions were those of compliance, understanding, gentleness and nurturing. The teacher was surprised by the overt resistance of many of the boys to the text and to the issue of homosexuality.

4.4 Reading Text Two

4.4.1 Textual Construction of Femininity and Masculinity in *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1993)

Looking for Alibrandi (Marchetta, 1992) is a romance narrative centred on a female character, a seventeen-year-old character called Josephine Alibrandi. She is in her final year at a prestigious girls' Catholic school in Sydney. According to the text, she is illegitimate and has never known her father. Her mother has brought her up alone with some help from her mother, Josephine's grandmother. The novel centres on the exploration of relationships and falling in love, it is about the return of a father and the discovery of secrets in the family. It is a narrative which constructs a version of many contemporary issues including ethnicity, illegitimacy and suicide. The text maintains hegemonic positions, love and relationships are the main concern.

Looking for Alibrandi is a text which replicates a patriarchal positioning which is underpinned love and romance. The romance is the discourse which brings oppositions together as complementary. Through romance, love and sex, the opposition of male and female come together, unified. In the text there is the quest for love, both the love of Josephine's absent father and the love of Jacob, around which the narrative revolves. Josephine says, 'I dream of being successful and of falling in love with someone with money. Of someone loving me. Of having two children. One boy and one girl' (Marchetta, 1992:71). The narrative places men in the position of hero, active, rational, powerful, and women in that of victim. Although the character, Josephine is at first constructed as powerful, intelligent, ambitious and self-directed, later in the text she capitulates to the power of the men in her life. Of Jacob she says 'I was so caught up with seeing him that I didn't care' (Marchetta, 1992:149). It is her father who saves her when she finds herself in a difficult situation. Josephine says of her father who comes to her assistance, 'But at the same time my heart was beating fast at the thought of Michael Andretti coming to defend me. He hadn't needed to. He had said once before that he owed me nothing. But whether he did or not, he had come through' (Marchetta, 1992:89).

Men are strongly implicated in this text as the romance text legitimises male power. The unification of man and woman is constructed as the perfect state in which the male dominates and the female capitulates to his power. In *Looking for Alibrandi* it is the female character, Josephine, who decides that she is not ready for a sexual relationship, but her decision is based on the fact that she is not engaged or in a more permanent relationship. Her decision is based on a notion of romantic love. She says, 'But I don't know if I love you enough and I don't even know if you love me enough. We don't even love each other, Jacob' (Marchetta, 1992:213). Yet it is the character, Jacob, who is self-determining and who decides to sever the relationship. He says, 'I'm not saying we haven't got a chance. We have a great chance. But now is all wrong' (Marchetta, 1992:251). It does not matter how strong the female character is, this text suggests that she still represents nurturance, passivity, helplessness, powerlessness, sensitivity and emotion. The male position is one of strength, independence, self-determination, aggression and ambition.

The romance positions woman as central to the text and she is an independent person who appears self-determining. As soon as the text shifts female characters into relationships with men or authority, they are recast in terms of the binary pair in which they have to take up a position which is other than strong, self-determining and independent. It is capitulation recast as strength. The character, Josephine accepts reluctantly the decision of Jacob and she is constructed to hope. She says, 'But I'm optimistic. I do believe in my heart that one day I will be with Jacob Coote again' (Marchetta, 1992:260). The narrative positions her father to provide a happily ever after ending. He moves to Sydney in order to be with Josephine and to get to know her. He says, 'I want to have my time with you now' (Marchetta, 1992:245). Josephine, as narrator, writes about her father as if she is in

love with him. She uses the language of the romance, 'But I love Michael Andretti more and more every day. I love him double to what I did maybe a month ago yet I see his faults now too' (Marchetta, 1992:259).

Women are much more visible in *Looking for Alibrandi* than they are in *Peter*. Josephine is represented as intelligent, she is a prefect at the Catholic school which she attends and is determined to be a barrister. Her difference is represented by her ethnicity, her illegitimacy and her intelligence. Josephine's mother is represented as the perfect single mother, Italian, a secretary and translator for some suburban doctors and a single parent, who 'slept with the boy next door when they were sixteen' (Marchetta, 1992:7). Josephine's grandmother is positioned as the family matriarch, dominating, rigid, a widow and a person with a secret. The women are positioned powerfully in the domestic sphere and with strength of character, but the power is limited by the construction of what it is to be female and does not extend beyond that construction. Although clever, Josephine is also positioned as emphasised feminine with a concern about her appearance. As narrator she writes, 'I'm average height and will probably never be able to get away with wearing a bikini in this lifetime, and my hair is a legacy from my father. It's curly and needs restraining at all times' (Marchetta, 1992:10). The power of the women is represented as an internal state and is therefore invisible while the power of men is powerfully visible. Josephine has a rival at school, the female character who is positioned to have everything, according to Josephine. Of Ivy, Josephine narrates, 'She's one of those girls with perfect white skin and not one split end in her strawberry blonde hair' (Marchetta, 1992:21). Josephine accepts the textual position that she is offered by the character, Jacob, she accepts that she might not even become a barrister which has been her ambition. 'Sometimes I'm not even sure that I want to be a barrister. But I'm not going to make that a problem or a hang up' (Marchetta, 1992:260). Instead of being self-determining she is prepared to accept the fate that life offers her. She says, 'When my results come out I'll make my decision then' (Marchetta, 1992:260). It seems as if her textual position as determined and ambitious has been repositioned as capitulation to patriarchy and assumption of an emphasised feminine role. She narrates, 'I think during that year Jacob got a bit more ambitious than he used to be and I became a bit less' (Marchetta, 1992:260).

The romance masks inequity and relations of power and recasts it as true love. It offers a future-oriented antidote to the current difficulties and challenges of day to day living. The narrative positions the central character, Josephine, to endure a series of challenges from which she does not escape unscathed. The suicide of a friend, her rejection by her male friend, her coming to terms with her illegitimacy and meeting her father places Josephine in a position from which she almost admits defeat. She is prepared to give up her ambition in return for love. It offers a replication of patriarchal gender relations which positions the readers to accept and desire the dominant positions of power and control. Young women are positioned as those who will support relationships, be the consumers, inscribe their bodies in ways which are attractive to men. Josephine is concerned about the way she looks

for Jacob. She says, 'I was embarrassed. Just say he felt a bit of flab and it turned him off' (Marchetta, 1992:210). The desire which is constructed by the text places young women in a position of powerlessness. Because the meanings that readers take from a text and bring to it stem from their positions in the world, contradictory though these may be, the girls are positioned to accept and desire the constructions of femininity offered by the romance. For Josephine the position is disappointing. Her relations with the men in her life have figured as indicative of a position of powerlessness for her, a position which the text constructs as personally empowering in that her experiences of life have matured her.

The position offered by the romance text to the female reader is one of self-realisation, through which the readers can insert themselves into the patriarchal discourse of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. Also available are the discourses of success and career for girls but these aims are only interim. The reading position offered is one which supports the binary opposition of male and female, of active and passive, of independent and dependent, of sexuality and romantic love. This discourse appeals to the girls who see the achievement of the male, the hero, marriage as the ultimate pleasure, excitement and tension which results in the ultimate capitulation. Although in the text Josephine does not achieve the hero, Jacob, the narrative encourages the reader to believe that she will eventually do so, or if not, she will get somebody just like him and she will live happily ever after. The narrative places Josephine in a helpless, subordinate, passive and powerless role. It is difficult for males who accept the discourse of hegemonic masculinity to accept a reading position which is not a powerful one because for them success lies in achieving independence and active sexuality with sexual capitulation as the ultimate prize. Thus they cannot read from the position of the central female character nor can they empathise with the males because although they are positioned hegemonically, they are described from the point of view of the female narrator who ascribes them with feelings and motivations that are not hegemonically male. The romance of this narrative text was the aspect that was most discussed. Other issues, like ethnicity, did not concern the students much and were not discussed in any detail by teacher or students. The position offered for female readers of a romance text such as *Looking for Alibrandi* confirms the patriarchal positioning of women. It is a misogynist text which sees women as other and lesser than men. Like other modern romances, it pretends equity and power for women and foils such ambition.

4.4.2 Student Positions to the Text

Looking for Alibrandi (Marchetta, 1992) raises many issues of the type that the students enjoy discussing. It constructs a view of ethnicity, of class, of religion, of private versus public education, of illegitimacy, of teenage sexuality, of ambition, of careers and of teenage suicide. The students did not have the discourses to take up the positions that the text potentially offered. They regarded the characters as real and talked about them as if they were. The boys resisted the text as one in which nothing happened. All students were willing and able to recount the simple

events of the story. They also made interim sense of the relationships. The power of the narrative text to appear real was evident.

In one class the question of what the teacher called 'givens' in the text was raised. The students were given a sheet of questions and they were given time in class to write down their answers. After some time for writing, the whole class discussion, now a typical format, resumed. The teacher encouraged the students to link their responses with the text, to use evidence from the text to support what they were claiming. All students appeared to find this difficult to do.

The students, in the discussion of issues constructed in the text, positioned themselves differently from the students in the text. They were interested in the power of money and prestige but felt that these issues were not relevant to them. Many of the students appeared not to understand how class works to disadvantage people. They claimed that money made little difference to them, although they agreed that there were some students at their school who valued designer clothes like Country Road, Sportsgirl, Stussi and Mambo.

When the issue of difference was discussed, Aboriginality was raised by the students and not by the teacher, possibly because for this group of students – mostly Anglo-Saxon – Aboriginality was an issue of difference they knew a little about. Many of the students revealed that they did not like the way that the Aboriginal children received preferential treatment at the school and in society. Some of the boys were concerned with the inequity that existed. Most of the class refused to see any justice in giving Aboriginal people extra help despite the efforts of the teacher.

After the discussion of their personal futures, one boy raised the issue of the photograph of the character, Josephine, on the front cover of the book. He showed contempt at the suggestion that the photograph was not the real Josephine. The association of the narrative construct and the real did not exist for Josh at this point. Most of the boys agreed that it had to be her while the girls argued that it could not possibly be. A boy claimed that if the photograph was not the real Josephine then the book would be entirely different for him and he would not like it. He kept sighing and saying, 'Well!' He claimed that he wanted her to be a chickie babe, someone who would look good in a bikini. The girls pointed out to him her description in the text but he rejected this view. He was determined that his reading was the accurate one and that she was not as she describes, 'I'm average height and probably will never be able to get away with wearing a bikini in this lifetime, and my hair is a legacy from my father. It's curly and needs restraining at all times' (Marchetta, 1992:10). The girls looked to the text for information while the boys preferred the photograph.

The view of narrative text assumed in the class was that it was mimetic, a representation of real life. At no time was it suggested that fiction could construct reality; it was taken for granted that it represented truth. When the teacher read an article on Marchetta which stated that the author did not claim to be the narrator of the text the students did not want to engage with the discussion. They wanted to see the text as real and to use personal experience to authenticate what the fiction represents. Many of the boys dismissed the text with comments like, 'It's stupid', 'I hate it', 'Nothing happens', 'I don't read books like this'. They resist the notion that the text was constructed. The students read the text as real, accepted the conventions of established patriarchal positioning and did not see the constructions of masculinity which might be disadvantageous for them. The girls were compliant readers of the text, reading for romance and finding it, while the boys were resistant readers, reading for action and not finding it and not liking the alternatives which the text offered.

4.5 Reading Text Three

4.5.1 Textual Construction of Femininity and Masculinity in *Dougy* (Moloney, 1993)

Dougy (Moloney, 1993) was read in the third term of the year and the teacher was male, a variation which appeared to affect the responses. As a male and a senior teacher in the school he had a great deal of power which was never questioned by the students. He did very little to exert overt power over the class but a high level of control was implicit in the responses of the students.

Dougy is narrated by a thirteen-year-old Aboriginal boy named Dougy. His character is represented as Aboriginal. He narrates the events which take place in his town over a short period of time. His sister, Gracey, is selected for the state athletics championships much to the astonishment and resentment of many of the white Australians in the town. White Australians are constructed by the text to think that the Aboriginal people get preferential treatment and their feelings precipitate a series of dramatic events in the town. Through the efforts of the character, Dougy, his family is saved and Dougy gains the confidence he lacks.

The story is full of dramatic action and told in a straight forward and colloquial way by Dougy. It attempts to construct a colloquial version of the way this group of Aboriginals speak, a language that a thirteen-year-old Aboriginal boy might use. Although it has action, it focuses on the consciousness of a thirteen-year-old boy and as such does not position the boys in the class in a favourable way to the text. For many of the students the language of this text is a barrier. The use of the first person is difficult for some. It is easier to reject the position of the first person narrator, if the position is not one which is appealing. The personal reflection involved in reading a text told from a first person perspective is much more appealing to the girls. The masculinity in the text is Aboriginal and as such is

marked and regarded as inferior. It reproduces the Aboriginal person as other and inferior and in doing so produces a racist discourse.

The discourse of Aboriginality as used in the narrative constructs Aboriginality as other. It positions Aboriginal people as oppressed and discriminated against and constructs a narrative around these issues. In the opening pages the prejudices against Aboriginality in terms of all the cultural myths and stereotypes are reproduced. The text positions Aboriginals as victims of the prejudice and does not offer an alternative position for them to take up. In the first paragraph of the text, Dougy, as narrator, describes his father as absent and a happy drunk, his mother as disapproving of the alcohol and uncomfortable when her husband is about, his sister, Gracey as the fastest runner in the town and his brother, Raymond as a football player with a potential for violence and a liking for alcohol. The representation of Aboriginality is fixed. They are represented as failed white people who live in poverty and squalor and who can never be white. When such problems are embedded in Aboriginality it seems as if it is a specific race problem and not a social problem. Limited versions of femininity and masculinity are presented complicated by Aboriginality. Such reproduction of race and gender reinforces the prejudices that already exist. Women are almost non-existent. Dougy's mother is poor and defeated and Gracey, because of her athletic prowess, her rejection of the culture of the other girls in the town, 'She's not like the rest of the girls in the town', (Moloney, 1993:1) and the active role she takes in the action of the narrative, is positioned as male. The text does not offer alternative versions, for instance, the Aboriginal who has been successful in white terms. There is no textual space for the Aboriginal to be successful in their terms. The text does not disrupt the stereotypes but it asks for a different response to the text. The text positions the readers to be sympathetic and understanding and a rhetoric of paternalism is enacted.

The text endorses the view that the only respectable way for Aboriginal people to become acceptable in white society is through, as Muecke suggests, 'particular forms of culture, or through sport' (1992:17). The narrative suggests that the way to gain legitimate middle-class Aboriginal identity is through privileged white activities such as sport. As Muecke claims these are unnecessary limits imposed on being Aboriginal (1992:17). *Dougy* attempts to construct a version of Aboriginality which includes confronting racism. It does not deal equally with other characters who have problems confronting their own prejudice. The white characters are either patronisingly sympathetic or antagonistic. The text does not juxtapose alternative images of Aboriginality except in the effort to represent Gracey as a talented and successful athlete. It shows desire within some of the Aboriginal characters to change their personal circumstances, to succeed on the football field, to gain in personal esteem or to do better at school. There is not one male authority figure who is anti-racist and who is able to be reflective and active about racism. The text does not offer alternative positions for everyone. Positions are naturalised, transparent and invisible.

A racist discourse, according to Muecke, 'functions to designate a people as something other than ideal, like adult white perfection, whose attributes tend to be self-determination, discipline and individualism' (1992:31). In an effort to position Aboriginal people as the same as white, the text *Dougy* (Moloney, 1993) uses discourses which Muecke describes as 'romantic' and 'racist'. In the 'romantic' discourse, 'Race differences were determined in essentialist ways, as if the Aboriginal people do things because their primitive drives compel them to do so' (1992:30). The text positions Aboriginal people as unable to handle alcohol and unable to hold down a job, not because of the social and material conditions of their lives but because of their race. In *Dougy* the Aboriginal people are a marginalised group, there is no diversity. It is racist in that it does not dislodge the stereotyped inscriptions of Aboriginality. Rather the text naturalises the inscriptions and tries to put them in a social context where the stereotypes remain. The reader, however, is positioned to take up a different position towards the stereotypes. The narrative implies that the happily ever after ending lies in sameness and not in diversity. In arguing for sameness the texts are imposing ideas of unity and similarity, masking difference and diversity. Multiple differences are not acceptable. Equity is achieved through assumed similarities and not through accepted diversity.

The text sustains and reproduces binary oppositions, especially those of white and black, male and female. When a person is situated as an other in a binary, for example, black or female, then it is almost impossible to escape otherness. It is not possible to be anything than other, otherwise the binary, so central to patriarchal thinking, has no meaning. So black always has to be inferior and marginalised. Black can only achieve status by being colonised by the white. Success lies in terms of white acceptance. While Aboriginality is positioned centrally in *Dougy*, gender is a crucial issue. Women are located as different and other to the men, they have little power, are poor and marginalised. Black women are invisible in the text, white women have some visibility but they are less powerful than white men. The white women are condescending to the black women but they are sympathetic and understanding. To be woman and black is to have much less power than any other character in the text.

The text positions the reader to be sympathetic and understanding in a paternalistic way about race and gender. It endorses white moral superiority. The pedagogical discourses used favoured personal response of the kind which accepted any response as valid. A Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse also informed the teaching. But because the students did not have available to them a critical discourse they lapsed into Personal Response Discourse.

The marked positions, of blackness and femaleness, as provided by the text, caused difficulties for both female and male readers, who positioned themselves differently towards the text. The marginalised positions of Aboriginal and woman are resisted often by the male readers for whom the dominant position is white,

male and middle-class. The content matter, especially that of Aboriginality, did not appeal to the boys who could not easily find a comfortable position for themselves in the text. Many of the girls were sympathetic to the position of the oppressed Aboriginal, in the same way that they were to other marginalised people. It is a racist view in that it is patronising and condescending. It is not politicised, rather it is sentimental and romanticised. Their empathy did not result in the questioning of notions of power or the recognition of power. Their position does not challenge racist discourses.

4.5.2 Student Positions to the Text

Both boys and girls positioned themselves towards *Dougy* in similar ways to the positions they assumed towards *Peter* and *Looking for Alibrandi*. Many of the girls positioned themselves as ideal readers of the text, compliant readers, who took up the positions offered by the text, while the boys were resistant to the positions which the text potentially offered them.

The teacher read sections of the text to the class and asked questions when he paused. At first most of the questions required recall or factual answers to what happened in the story. He asked questions like, 'When did the violence happen?' 'Where is the town?' After the reading of Chapter 2, the questions were focused on the geographical location of the novel and whether it compared with anything the students knew about. The chapter introduces the issue of racial discrimination when the athletic coach of Gracey, Dougy's sister, tells her that some of the town object to her being given extra financial help to attend the state championships in Brisbane. Many of the boys positioned themselves as white and hegemonic masculine. They endorsed violence and they made it clear that they approved of the actions of the town, that they thought it unfair if Aboriginal people received extra help. The girls positioned themselves in opposition to this view but the discussion was not elaborated.

Each session followed a similar pattern. The chapter was read and the discussion was lively and brief. The focus was on what was happening in the text with speculation about what might happen and what could happen. There was some deconstruction of the text and some discussion of the characters. The students read much of the text to themselves, wrote responses to the text and spent time in the library. The boys continued to resist a position of sympathy towards the plight of the oppressed Aboriginal people in the text, while the girls continued to show empathy.

The teacher instigated a discussion about violence which interested the boys. It concerned the murder in the book. The boys discussed the details of the gun shot wound, how big the hole would be, how much blood there would be and whether or not the shot would have been as efficient as it was portrayed in the novel. Many of the boys were interested in these details, especially speculating about where the

blood would go and what other organs would be lost. There was an effort to deconstruct the text and speculate about whether or not the text was an accurate representation of what could happen in real life. The girls wondered if the death might have taken longer, but those boys with knowledge of guns and shooting quickly informed them that the information in the novel was accurate. The boys positioned themselves to endorse violence and the use of guns. They enjoyed the textual reconstruction of the shooting, the blood, holes in bodies, splattering of body parts, all told in a cold and unengaged way with the kind of voyeurism which is a feature of action movies. Many of the girls were visibly distressed at the retelling.

This discussion of violence led to a recounting of a car accident which involved some of the boys in the class. Those involved discussed seriously and enthusiastically the detail they remembered. The accident and the survival of the victims appeared to be of enormous significance to the group. Those who had survived and all who were involved gained enormous importance with the group of boys. The teacher endorsed the experience of the boys and attempted to relate it to the text. Despite the endorsement of the boys' experience, it was the girls who remained more willing to discuss their readings and interpretations of the book, while the boys wanted to revel in the blood and danger of the 'real' world. So while the girls openly voiced their abhorrence of violence and their ignorance of guns, they positioned themselves as compliant readers, who were willing to engage in a discussion of elements of a text that they did not like. They positioned themselves as empathetic towards the characters in the text.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter, as a contribution to the grounded theory approach used, has examined how in the reading of the three narrative texts in the classroom the students were both positioned by the texts, by traditional reading practices and pedagogy to read in gendered ways. They were engaged in the social construction of meaning and at many times seeking to introduce, to understand and to evaluate their experiences of life. While all readers used elements of shared cultural experience to construct meaning, the readings demonstrated the extent to which they were gendered social practices which replicated the existing social order. For each of the three narrative texts most of the girls and the boys positioned themselves similarly, the boys were resistant to the texts and the girls compliant to them. This thesis suggests that the boys read for confirmation of male hegemonic positions and for action and did not like it when they did not get it and the girls read for romance and usually found it. As readers, both girls and boys could only easily take up the subject positions they already have as no alternative positions were made available through the pedagogical discourses of the classroom nor their learned reading practices. The texts chosen encouraged reading practices which were not dislodged by the pedagogical practices.

Chapter 5

Mapping the Students

Introduction: Locating the Territory

This chapter is an alternative reading of the reading processes as part of the grounded theory approach used, in terms of the thematic coding of the classroom processes examined in Chapter 3. The empirical work is recognised to operate within a conscious context of theory building. The chapter explores the construction of major themes in the reading process as response to narrative text in the classroom. The themes were constructed from an ethnographic reading of the classroom and applied to the transcripts through an iterative process. Each theme was applied to the transcripts and the number of occurrences counted. The themes were re-articulated as categories, and from the categories dominant discourses were produced.

Instead of suggesting that the six discourses represent an opposition between the rational versus the emotional, reading from the head and reading from the heart (Patterson, 1997:431), their workings are rather more complicated and can be seen as an organising principle in literary education. They are suggested not as psychological or sociological but as discursively produced through a specific pedagogical regime. The discourses are seen as part of a range of responses to a particular pedagogical artefact, a linguistic artefact and a technique of literary education. The discourses can be read either as an expression of the discursive location of the students and also as a way of regularised literary response. After Patterson, the analysis of the discourses is not to reveal individual subjectivities but to map the discursive spaces open to and taken up by students in the literary classroom (Patterson, 1997:432). The discourses produced are seen to enact 'a series of textualised personae that may or may not correspond to individual subjectivity' (Fuller & Lee, 1997:413, after Bourdieu 1991; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). While the discourses appear to have stability because they are socially and culturally constructed, they are also open to change, to reconstruction and extension.

5.1 Open Coding

The open coding process identified themes of students' responses to the narrative texts. It began with a mental mapping exercise by the researcher to reconstruct what had happened in the classroom and to identify layers of meaning in an initial unstructured way through a process of intense reflection. The mental map located in an experiential frame of initial themes was constructed by the researcher as participant observer in the classroom when the observations were made and the texts collected. Each of the texts collected, the transcripts, the tapes, the journal and the writing of the students in response to the texts, provided the basis for the mental mapping exercise and the generation of key questions.

The first stage was to develop themes that were recognised by the researcher when students were responding to texts. The intention of the research was to explore in a systematic inquiry if the responses were gendered and if so to investigate how gendered differences were produced. If the responses were not gendered, the similarities of responses were to be explored.

The aim was to construct themes which could be applied to the transcripts to test whether and in what ways responses to narrative texts were gendered. The themes were constructed from the researcher's experience of how girls and boys typically responded to narrative texts without assuming that the themes were closed and mutually exclusive. The mental mapping exercises of the initial themes were consciously 'common sense' maps such as might be derived from research and teaching experience.

The process involved the counting of responses falling within each theme. The process used in the development of the themes was based on the professional knowledge, personal knowledge and relevant theoretical and professional literature, it was acknowledged that the themes were provisional and could be transformed in the process of application to the transcripts. As a result of the comparisons and contrasts in relation to the transcripts and a close scrutiny of the language the final themes were identified for application to the transcripts. It was the themes identified in Figures 1.1 and 1.2 which were applied to the transcripts. These were equal in number in order to enhance the notion of gender balance and were labelled 'male' and 'female' ways of responding to and engaging with the text, though not exclusively the province of boys or girls.

Figure 1.1: Different ways of engaging with the text

MALE THEMES	
1	divert from the text to discuss what they think about the issues raised
2	often refuse to engage with the text as part of their attitude towards the text
3	do not empathise with the characters/ make judgments rather than sympathising or understanding
4	do not see characters as constructions
5	believe that they can act upon the world and change it
6	keep outside the text/ not open to theoretical implications
7	use the text to classify in a rigid way and find answers/ looking for proof in the text about their assumptions about the outer world/ like the factual and resist speculation/ limited anticipatory frames
8	believe that their interpretations of the text and the world are evident and that others share them/ compete for authority with the text to which they have not assented/ operate in hierarchies of power/ act as if they have authority
9	not concerned about generating their own meanings, to speculate, predict, see possibilities, to propound suppositions, the first coherence is the coherence
10	comparisons more likely with TV/ privilege TV, video and film

Figure 1.2: Different ways of engaging with the text

FEMALE THEMES	
1	identify, participate, empathise with plot, character and the world as if they are real
2	they are part of the narrative/ as if they are one or more of characters/ enrol in the narrative
3	do not see that they can act upon the world
4	interact with the text much more, see the subtleties of construction of the text and the characters
5	more willing to empathise, speculate and elaborate
6	happy with the discourse of the individual and individual difference
7	reflective, willing to note assumptions/ to consider theories and ideologies, theoretical/ ideological readers as opposed to practical ones
8	patient and conscientious readers willing to defer gratification
9	the first coherence is not the only coherence
10	make comparisons with other narrative texts/ able and willing to compare with other narrative texts

5.2 Themes and Transcripts

5.2.1 Application of the Themes to the Transcripts

The transcripts of classroom interaction were then interrogated again using the twenty themes described in Figures 1.1 and 1.2 to find out how many student responses, female and male, could be seen to fall into one or another category. The description of each theme was lengthy and none of them could be reduced to a single word as they described a complicated reading response which defied a simple description. Each of the themes as finally described encapsulated one recognisable process or idea. One by one each of the themes was applied to the transcripts. It was a selective reading approach (Van Manen, 1990:93) in which the transcripts were read many times and the theme identified and marked with a highlighter pen so that it would be easily recognisable for counting. At the end of each application the numbers of responses were counted and the responses of the girls and the boys recorded. Tables 1.1 and 1.2 represented the numerical results of the application of each of the themes, presented in the order that the applications were completed and not in a hierarchal order. They demonstrated the number of responses that the girls and the boys made to each of the themes, as found in the full transcripts.

Table 1.1

Male Themes		Number of Responses	
		Boy	Girl
1	Divert from text to discuss what they think about the issues raised	24	8
2	often refuse to engage with text as part of their attitude towards the text	26	0
3	do not empathise with the characters, make judgments rather than sympathising or understanding	40	35
4	do not see characters as constructions	21	37
5	believe they can act upon the world and change it/they can act upon the text and control it	19	8
6	keep outside the text/not open to theoretical implications	12	55
7	use the text to classify in a rigid way and find answers/looking for proof in the text about their assumptions about the outer world, like the factual and resist speculation, limited anticipatory frames	80	47
8	believe that their interpretations of the text and the world are evident and that others share them/compete for authority with the text to which they have not assented, operate in hierarchies of power, act as if they have authority	not supported	
9	not concerned about generating their own meanings, to speculate, predict, see possibilities, to propone suppositions, the first coherence is the coherence	not supported	
10	comparisons more likely with TV/privilege TV, video, film	9	11

Table 1.2

Female Themes		Number of Responses	
		Girl	Boy
1	identify, participate, empathise with plot, character and world of the text as if they are real	163	76
2	they are part of the narrative/as if they are one or more of the characters/enrol in the narrative	125	32
3	do not see that they can act on the world	5	0
4	interact with the text much more, see the subtleties of the text and the characters	248	121
5	willing to empathise, speculate, elaborate	206	81
6	happy with the discourse of the individual and individual difference	25	5
7	reflective, willing to note assumptions/to consider theories and ideologies, theoretical/ideological readers as opposed to practical ones	55	12
8	patient and conscientious readers willing to defer gratification	not supported	
9	the first coherence is not the only coherence	not supported	
10	make comparisons with other narrative texts/able and willing to compare with other narrative texts	11	9

Table 2

Themes		Number of responses	
		Boy	Girl
1	action view of the world/ surface/ factual/ practical	98	31
2	empathetic view of the world/ empathy with the world	2	51
3	use of the subjunctive, words like 'might' 'probably' 'it seems' 'you're right but' and 'and yet'	6	10

There were three themes which were applied to the transcripts which did not appear in the original coding because they appeared in the transcripts but were not represented in the themes identified in Tables 1.1 and 1.2. The new themes were itemised in Table 2.

5.3 Axial Coding

5.3.1 Counting the Themes

The themes were drawn out of the transcripts which were examined systematically in terms of those themes. This was the first part of the iterative process of the research and the attempt to uncover layers of meaning as expressed in student/teacher talk. The measurement of the responses was only one of a number of approaches adopted in exploring the multiple meanings involved.

The responses were counted and categories, reflecting the prevalence of responses, were constructed from the collected data. The development of the categories involved measurement followed by interpretation and analysis. All the themes where the boys recorded more responses than the girls were listed together. All the themes where the girls recorded more responses than the boys were listed. This process changed the number of themes which referred predominantly but not exclusively to the boys, and the number which referred predominantly but not exclusively to the girls. The process progressively collapsed themes which overlapped to eliminate redundancy.

For both the boys and the girls the themes were organised in order of those in which there was the greatest difference between the frequency of responses of the boys and girls to those in which there were the least difference in frequency. In terms of all but two of the themes, both boys and girls responded. This was a significant finding because it demonstrated that all the students either female or male, were capable of responding in similar ways to the texts. There was one theme that reflected responses only of the boys, 'often refuse to engage with the text as part of their attitude towards the text', and one of them that reflected responses only used by the girls, 'do not see that they can act on the world'. The interpretation of the findings suggested that there were some themes that the boys used much more than did the girls and there were some that the girls used much more than did the boys.

Overall, the number of themes through an iterative process of refining and rearticulating meanings appearing in the transcripts, were reduced to eighteen, the number of predominantly male themes was reduced from ten to six, while the number of predominantly female themes increased from ten to twelve. The following themes were omitted from the male list because they were expressed in the negative, and hence, there was no evidence whether the boys used them or not. The themes which were omitted were: Theme 4, 'do not see characters as constructions'; Theme 6, 'keep outside the text/ not open to the theoretical implications'; Theme 9, 'not concerned about generating their own meanings, to speculate, predict, see possibilities, to propound suppositions, the first coherence is the coherence', except that it was expressed as a positive; and Theme 10 Table 1.1, 'comparisons more likely with TV/ privilege TV, video and film'. There was

evidence in the transcripts that the girls used them when articulated positively so they became incorporated into the list of female themes.

Omitted from the male list because there was no evidence of it in the transcripts was Theme 8 Table 1.1, 'believe that their interpretations of the text and the world are evident and that others share them/ compete for authority with the text to which they have not assented, operate in hierarchies of power, boys act as if they have authority'.

Another theme was added to the male list. This was identified in Figure 6, Theme 1.1, which read 'action view of the world, surface/factual/practical'. This became predominantly a boy's response. Theme 6 Table 1.1 on the male list presented an interesting challenge. It read 'keep outside the text/ not open to theoretical implications'. The girls appeared to respond to this theme more than the boys. When the transcripts were re-interrogated it was found that the girls actually considered the theoretical implications of the text and the issues the text raised about life more so than the boys, so the theme had to be re-named. In Table 3 this became Theme 5 on the female list, 'willing to note theoretical/ ideological implications of text, of life'.

There was no evidence in the transcripts of Theme 8 Table 1, 'patient and conscientious readers willing to defer gratification', or Theme 9 Table 1 on the female list, 'the first coherence is not the only coherence'. These themes were eliminated from the female list.

The female themes increased from ten to twelve as additional themes were identified in the girls' responses. Theme 4 Table 1.2 from the male list, 'do not see characters as constructions', became Theme 10 Table 1 on the female list. Theme 6 Table 1.1 on the male list, 'keep outside the text/ not open to the theoretical implications' was reworded as Theme 8 Table 1.2 on the female list. Theme 9 Table 1.2 on the male list, 'concerned about generating their own meanings, to speculate, predict, see possibilities, to propound suppositions', became Theme 7 Table 3.2 on the female list. Theme 10 Table 1 on the male list, 'comparisons more likely with TV/ privilege TV, video and film', became a female theme, Theme 12 Table 3.2, because it was a theme which was used slightly more by the girls.

Additional themes from Table 2.2, Theme 2 'empathetic view of the world/ empathy with the world' and Theme 3 'use of the subjunctive, words like *might*, *probably*, *it seems*, *you're right but* and *and yet*' became Themes 2 and 9 Table 3.2 on the female list. Theme 11 Table 3.2 on the female list 'divert from text to discuss issues raised by the teacher' arose as a result of investigating Theme 1 Table 1.2 on the male list, which read 'divert from text to discuss issues raised'. A close scrutiny of the transcripts revealed that the girls diverted from the text more willingly if it was the teacher who invited them to do so, whereas the boys

diverted either by raising issues themselves and also when the teacher invited them to do so.

5.3.2 Development of Categories

The next step in the axial coding was the interrogation of the themes themselves in conjunction with the transcripts in order to produce the categories. Whereas the open coding process identified the themes in the data which reflected the processes used by both girls and boys when responding to narrative texts in a classroom setting, the axial coding clarified the themes by examining their labels closely and eventually defining categories. In this way a theme was re-articulated as a category. From the themes identified to exist in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 and 2.1 and 2.2, six categories for the boys were refined and articulated.

Theme 2 Table 1.1 'often refuse to engage with the text as part of their attitude towards the text' was reformulated more concisely in Table 3.1 as Category 1 'refuse to engage with the text'. The number of words was reduced and the intended meaning of the theme captured more precisely.

Theme 1 Table 3.1 'action view of the world/factual/practical' became Category 2 Table 3.1 for the boys and read 'action/surface reading of the world' as it became clear that the factual was included in Category 3 Table 3.1 'like the factual and resist abstractions and generalisations'. The word 'practical' was omitted because of lack of evidence. The 'surface view of the world' was added because it was connected with the privileging of action rather than reflection in the views expressed by the boys.

Theme 1 Table 1.1 read 'divert from text to discuss what they think about the issues raised'. In Table 3.1 this became Category 3 for the boys and read 'divert from text to discuss issues raised themselves'. Close interrogation of the transcripts revealed that both boys and girls diverted from the text. The girls did so when invited by the teacher more than did the boys, but the boys diverted more when not invited to.

Theme 5 Table 1.1 'believe that they can act upon the world and change it/ believe they can act on the text and change it' was changed in Table 3.1 to Category 4 'believe they are powerful and can act upon the world and change it'. There was no evidence in the transcripts that they believed they could change the meaning of the text. The word 'power' was added as it was indicated in the transcripts through words used by the boys that a feeling of power was connected with agency in the world.

Theme 7 Table 1.1 on the male list 'use the text to classify in a rigid way and find answers/ looking for proof in the text about their assumptions about the outer world, like the factual and resist speculation, limited anticipatory frames' was reduced to Category 5 Table 3.1 'like the factual and avoid abstractions and generalisations'. There was little indication after application of the theme to the transcripts that the boys used the text to classify, find answers, seek confirmation of their views or that they had limited anticipatory frames. They preferred to respond to the factual and resisted making abstractions and generalisations.

Theme 3 Table 1.1 read 'do not empathise with the characters, make judgments rather than sympathising or understanding'. This was simplified to Category 6 Table 3.1 for the boys to 'make judgments'. The reduction of words make the category more concise and expressed what it was that the boys did rather than expressing as well what they did not do which was they were not generally empathetic, sympathetic or understanding.

There were six categories identified where the boys' responses predominated. When this process was completed the twelve categories for the girls were developed from the themes identified in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 and Table 2.

Category 1 Table 3.2 for the girls read 'do not see that they can act on the world' which was a direct replication of Theme 3 Table 1.2 as it was seen to be a clear articulation of what occurred in the transcripts through the girls' responses.

Theme 2 Table 2.2 'empathetic view of the world/empathy with the world' was added after the first group of themes identified in Table 1.2 were applied to the transcripts and it was revealed that there were some processes which occurred but which had not been taken into account. The words of Theme 2 were reduced and the repetition and redundancy reduced so that Category 2 Table 3.2 read 'empathetic/understanding reading of the world'. This formulation was more concise and reflected the evidence in transcripts. The use of the word 'reading' more accurately reflected what it was that the students were doing.

Theme 6 Table 1.2 on the female list read 'happy with the discourse of the individual and individual difference'. This became Category 3 Table 3.2 for the girls and read 'endorse the discourse of individual difference'. The repetition of the word 'individual' was not necessary. The word 'happy' was replaced with 'endorse' which better captured what it was that the students did.

Theme 7 Table 1.2 read 'reflective, willing to note assumptions/to consider theories and ideologies, theoretical/ideological readers as opposed to practical ones'. This became Category 4 Table 3.2 for the girls 'willing to note theoretical/ideological implications of text, of life'. A willingness to consider the

theoretical and ideological implications encapsulates other aspects of the theme, reflectiveness and the willingness to consider assumptions, so the words of the category were simplified. The words 'of text, of life' were added because interrogation of the transcripts revealed that the responses to the theoretical and ideological implications took two forms, one to the text and the other to life. They were separable, easily identifiable but interconnected.

Theme 2 Table 1.2 read 'they are part of the narrative/as if they are one or more of the characters/enrol in the narrative'. The processes involved in this theme were more adequately encapsulated in the words 'enrol in the narrative' which became Category 5 Table 3.2.

Theme 3 Table 2.2 read 'use of the subjunctive, words like *might, probably, it seems, you're right but* and *and yet*'. The word 'tentative' incorporated the ideas suggested by the use of the subjunctive and suggested more. The use of the term was not intended to be derogatory rather it was intended to suggest an openness rather than a closure of meaning. Category 6 Table 3.2 for the girls then became 'tentative'.

Theme 5 Table 1.2 on the female list read 'willing to empathise, speculate and elaborate'. As the process of empathy had been identified as a separate theme and category it was omitted from the emerging category which became Category 7 Table 3.2 'speculate and elaborate'. The two processes were seen as separate but intimately connected, hence they were paired.

Theme 1 Table 1.2 on the female list read 'identify, participate, empathise with plot, character and the world of the text as if they are real'. The category which was constructed after interrogation of the transcripts Category 8 Table 3.2 was 'talk about the characters as if they are real'. As a theme, this was complicated and involved a number of processes. Identification and participation had already been identified in other categories, in Category 2 which was to do with empathy, and in Category 5 which involved the process of enrolling in the narrative. Application of the theme to the transcripts revealed that the responses to the text were predominantly to talk about the characters as if they were real. Hence the category was a simplification and clarification of the theme.

Theme 4 Table 1.2 read 'interact with the text much more, see the subtleties of construction of the text and the characters'. The application of the theme to the transcripts revealed that this theme needed to be divided into two processes, one to interact with the text and two to recognise the constructed nature of the characters and the text. As a result Theme 4 Table 1.2 became two categories, Category 9 Table 3, 'interact with text' and Category 10 Table 3.2, 'see characters and text as constructions'.

Theme 1 Table 1.1 on the male list read 'divert from text to discuss what they think about the issues raised'. Interrogation of the transcripts identified two processes, one was to divert to discuss issues raised by themselves which was predominantly a boys' response and two was to divert from the text to discuss issues raised by the teacher which was predominantly a girls' response. Category 11 Table 3.1 became 'Divert from text to discuss issues raised by the teacher'.

Theme 10 Table 1.1 read 'comparisons more likely with TV/privilege TV, video and film'. What was clear to the researcher from a close scrutiny of the transcripts was that there were very few responses which used any other texts, visual or print, as a comparison and TV was not privileged as was expected. There were some comparisons, however, so Category 12 Table 3.1 became, 'make comparisons with narrative texts/TV/film'.

In the process of applying the themes to the collected data many of them were reconstructed because of the way the data supported or did not support the researcher's own constructions. It was in this way that a grounded theory approach informed the theoretical position of the researcher. Questions were asked of them and they were again compared and contrasted with each other, and as a result, the categories were constructed to reflect more accurately the complexity of the meanings involved. The perceived conditions which gave rise to the categories were continually questioned. These conditions included the context which gave rise to the phenomena. In this case the context included the classroom, the school, the society, as well as the specific pedagogy and the three narrative texts which were used. The implications of these influences will be considered in the next chapter where theories of gender, the construction of subjectivity and the teaching of narrative texts will be used to examine the discourses of the English classroom.

Comparisons of the themes were made. At each stage the themes were compared against the transcripts and accepted or rejected. From this process of axial coding the categories were constructed, six categories where the major response was from the boys, and twelve categories where the major response was from the girls. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 represented the categories which lead to the formulation of the major discourses. For both the boys and the girls the categories were presented in order, from the greatest difference between the boys and the girls in the number of responses, to the least difference between them. Each of the categories was discrete but many of them overlap. For instance there was a very close relationship between Category 5 for the girls, 'enrol in the narrative', and Category 8 for the girls, 'talk about the characters in the text as if they are real', so that some of the responses were counted in both categories. Therefore the numbers in each category primarily illuminate the relationship between the numbers in that category and are not intended to add up to a total number of responses to the texts. Because some of the responses were counted more than once, if the numbers were added, the total would be more than the total number of responses to the texts. A description of each of the categories follows Tables 3.1 and 3.2.

Table 3.1

Male Responses	Themes in response to text	number of responses		% response to each theme	
		Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl
1	refuse to engage with text	26	0	100	0
2	action/surface reading of the world	98	31	76	24
3	divert from text to discuss issues raised themselves	24	8	75	25
4	believe they are powerful and can act upon the world and change it	19	8	70	30
5	like the factual and avoid abstractions and generalisations	80	47	63	37
6	make judgments	40	35	53	47

The approach to the measurement of the responses within each theme is part of the empirical element of grounded theory. The quantification of responses within each theme for both girls and boys enabled the researcher to see the extent to which the theme was evident and the relationship of the themes to the gender of the respondent. The numbers represent patterns in the frequency of responses rather than a statistical analysis. The patterns are part of the interpretation of the data which illuminate how all students can and do take up all the discursive positions but that they choose to locate themselves in response to narrative texts in an English classroom predominantly in those positions which endorse hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity.

Table 3.2

Female Responses	Themes in response to text	number of responses		% response to each theme	
		Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy
1	do not see that they can act on the world	6	0	100	0
2	empathetic/understanding reading of the world	51	2	96	4
3	endorse the discourse of individual difference	25	5	83	17
4	willing to note theoretical/ideological implications of text/life	55	12	82	18
5	enrol in narrative	135	32	81	19
6	tentative	19	6	76	24
7	speculate and elaborate	206	81	72	28
8	talk about the characters in the text as if they are real	163	76	68	32
9	interact with text	248	121	67	33
10	see characters and text as constructions	37	21	64	36
11	divert from text to discuss issues raised by teacher	100	68	60	40
12	make comparisons with narrative texts/TV/film	11	10	52	47

5.4 Male Categories

5.4.1 Category 1: Refuse to engage with text

This category referred to those occasions when the students openly refused to answer or make a comment on the text which was under discussion. It was clear in the transcripts when a student refused to respond to or engage with the text. The refusals differed in type. Comments like, 'I don't want to talk about it', were typical of the refusal to engage in talk about the text. Others included, 'I don't read books about poofers, I read books about sports', 'I don't know', 'It is not about the book', 'Don't ask me!' 'I don't want to know!' 'That's a stupid question!' 'I

don't care' or 'I want to go to the library for once'. Most of the refusals were phrased in the negative 'I don't want', 'I don't know' or 'Don't ask me'. All of the refusals were in response to questions which the teacher asked, often directly. With this category it was only the boys who refused to engage with or respond to the text. The refusals can be read as resistance to the questions or inability to answer the questions. If the girls did not know an answer or were reluctant to speak, they always attempted to make some response. If the girls did refuse to engage with the text, their refusal was silent and not identifiable in the transcripts.

The refusal of boys to engage with or respond to the text positions them extremely powerfully. The boys in this class attempted successfully to control the agenda, they influenced the response of others to the text, silencing those who might have liked the text or were willing to engage with it and were a powerful potential influence on the teacher's future selection of texts. While this position does not help the boys to be successful students of narrative texts, it potentially positions them powerfully in the world, where decision making and control of others in many fields is important for success.

5.4.2 Category 2: Action/surface reading of the world

From Theme 1 'action view of the world/surface/factual/ practical' in Table 2 the category 'action/surface reading of the world' was constructed. This category indicated that the responses to the world remained on the surface, superficial action was prioritised, motivations and explanations were not important. Thoughts and feelings seemed to be of little interest to the boys as they were seen to obstruct the action. Anything below the surface was seen as irrelevant. The tension in the theme 'action view of the world/surface/factual' was that it sought an affirmative statement of the boys' behaviour rather than a negative indictment of them. It was hoped that it would not be implied that the boys' responses were superficial. The category that was constructed was intended to capture what it was that many boys did when they read the world. It was thought that they would read the events of the world as obvious and not in need of interrogation. There was little evidence in the transcripts to suggest that their readings of the world were empathetic, their concerns were to do with the significance of what they considered to be events or action. The events of the world were more important and they tended to read the text through their reading of the world, rendering the text invisible or dismissing it. These events usually encoded the nature of hegemonic masculinity, for instance, competition, violence, crime, ambition and success both physical and intellectual.

Events which were not associated with hegemonic versions of masculinity did not count for most of the boys. Hegemonic masculinity needed to be the subject of itself, any other subject had to be marginal and then not worthy of comment or interrogation. The action/surface reading of the world is the only one which has validity for many boys, who judged the worth of events by their ability to validate

them by comparing them with their versions of the world. Rather than an understanding, sympathetic or empathetic reading of the world, many of the boys focused on action and surface statements. For example, instead of commenting on what the text might contain many of the boys were more interested in surface features of the lesson and comments like, 'Geez, the chapters are long', 'About two pages' (and laughs), 'Geez, I had a lot to say in that' and 'Is that all?' were often typical.

The boys often gave directions in a way that indicated a reluctance to speculate. For example, 'Keep reading', was a direction given by some of the boys when they were frustrated or bored with the pace of the lesson. Their reluctance to probe more deeply was evidenced in the comment, 'Read the next chapter and you will see' and 'Don't ask me!' Reluctance to comment in depth was also revealed when the teacher asked a boy his opinion about a chapter which had just been read to them and he insisted that rather than answering the question, the book continue to be read. Although this reluctance was associated with the text, it also revealed a reading of the world that suggested things have to happen and to happen quickly otherwise boredom would set in.

To understand the world or to be understanding about the events of the world was not of evident interest to most of the boys. When the teacher wrote on the board 'Mrs Smith is a lesbian' and asked the students what they thought about it, one of the boys said, 'I don't care' and when asked if it mattered if she was a lesbian said, 'No, I don't care'. He refused to engage with the statement as if it was real or mattered and preferred to remain in his world of immediacy, where he did not care about the issue and it did not warrant his attention. This can be read as resistance or refusal to engage. It can also be read as interest in the world of the immediate which did not require him to account for his opinion. It was not evident if there was an underlying meaning to his statement and if there was, he was not willing to share it.

When the teacher asked if anyone was a practising Catholic and attended church regularly, one of the boys replied, 'I want to go to the library for once'. He ignored the teacher's question and displayed a desire to take action, thus privileging a moment in the real world. He demonstrated a resistance to the teacher's agenda and insisted on doing what he wanted rather than engaging in any conversation that the teacher might want to encourage. Again this can be read as resistance or refusal. It can also be seen that rather than operating in the world of the intellect, he insisted on operating in a world of action.

In a boys' world of action they were able to do what they wanted. Their comments were about closure of meaning rather than sustaining a debate or keeping the meanings open. When challenged to give reasons, the boys were able to retain their discourse of the present by making comments like, 'I am not going to answer any more questions because those idiot girls interrupt me'. This comment was made

with assurance and contempt. Operating in a world of the present, a world where the present was more important than the classroom debate, gave most of the boys the opportunity to give short, superficial, action oriented comments, typified by the comment, which, although about a text, represented the boys' construction of their worlds: 'Nothing happened. It got better at the end. There was not enough happening. Not enough action.'

5.4.3 Category 3: Divert from text to comment on issues raised themselves

The category 'divert from text to discuss issues raised themselves' described responses when the conversation relocated the speaker, through deliberate subversion of the conversation about the text, to a discussion of a preferred topic. This was closely connected with Category 1 'refuse to engage with text'. It was the boys who, three times more often than the girls, diverted from the text to raise issues they wanted to discuss. At first it was supposed that the boys wished to discuss issues that they were interested in but close scrutiny of the transcripts revealed that this was not the case. In most cases the boys wanted to assert a position and so the words 'comment on' replaced the word 'discuss'. The boys instigated diversions for different purposes. Sometimes they diverted from a discussion of the text to suggest that they do other activities. It was suggested by one boy that they go to the Pizza Hut, by another that they go to see the film, *Speed*, and by another that they go to the library. They made comments like, 'I'm just sitting here', and, 'Todd called me a wanker'. These comments, while a diversion from the text, could also be seen as a refusal to engage with the text.

More importantly, they raised issues which were important to them and did not relate directly to the text. Where the text, *Peter* (Walker, 1991) positions the reader to be sympathetic to the issue of an exploration of sexuality, the boys pre-empted the issue of sexuality and focused the discussion on homosexuality. They made comments like, 'I do not think poofers are right. It's disgusting', 'My dad says they should all be shot', and, 'He would not be a friend of mine if he was gay'. Once diverted, the teacher participated in the conversation. In most cases the boys resisted any detailed discussion or analysis, they were insistent on positioning themselves as hegemonically masculine in relation to the issues. The act of diversion for the boys was as important in positioning themselves as hegemonically masculine as was the content of the diversion.

5.4.4 Category 4: Believe that they are powerful and can act upon the world and change it

Category 4 'believe that they are powerful and can act upon the world and change it', captured the attempt of the students to locate and relocate themselves in positions where they assumed control and took action in the world. As with Theme 5 Table 1, this included the words, 'believe they can act upon the text and change it'. While the boys gave the impression in discussion of the text that they

knew what the text was about and wished to assert their knowledge, there was no evidence in the transcripts of this attitude so those words were eliminated from the category. This was another example of how the text was rendered invisible for many of the boys. It was far more important to act upon the world. However, there was evidence that they felt powerful and that they thought they could act upon the world and change it. The boys responded to this category more than twice as much as the girls. In the discussion of homosexuality the boys made comments like, 'You shoot them' in order to get rid of them, or, 'Yes, I would beat him up and if it made no difference I would beat him up again', or, 'Yes, I'd smash his balls if it were me. Even if it was my brother'. In a discussion of how one learned about sexuality there were comments from the boys like, 'I'm good at it already'. Other comments from the boys included, 'I am not going to answer any more questions because those idiot girls interrupt me'. They made suggestions about what they wanted to do in their worlds, 'Let's go to the Pizza Hut', and, 'Let's go and see *Speed?*'

The comments from the girls which indicated that they thought they had agency and could act upon the world were more about themselves and what they thought they might be able to do in the future. For instance they said, 'Girls can do anything these days', and, 'They [boys and girls] have become more alike ... in opportunities'. The girls also made some attempt to organise the world in which they were living. For instance, they tried to facilitate the success of the class with comments like, 'Don't get him to read because he is a real homophobe. Get someone who will do it seriously', 'Let's get all the females up here', and, 'Everyone shut up if you want to get the book finished'. They showed some insistence on their ability to hold views that their parents might not approve of with comments like, 'You do not have to tell them. It is up to you. It is your choice'. Unlike the boys, the girls did not express the view that violence was a way of controlling the world.

The responses of the boys suggested that they positioned themselves as strong and assertive, they used louder voices, believed they had the right to be heard no matter what and they dominated the discussion and controlled the agenda. They silenced those opinions which did not correspond with the dominant male view. Both in what the boys said and in how they delivered their opinions, their responses encoded hostility, aggression and violence. Their masculine hegemony was protected because of the imminent and implied threat of violence, either verbal or physical, by the boys which was endorsed by the pedagogy. This position was a very powerful one.

5.4.5 Category 5: Like the factual and avoid abstractions and generalisations

Category 5, 'like the factual and avoid abstractions and generalisations', captured the type of response which indicated that the boys positioned themselves as able to make unambiguous statements of fact, ignoring issues of accuracy or validity.

Abstractions and generalisations were not necessary because the facts were able to be asserted without explanation or justification. The responses were statements of fact and did not need to be interrogated. To make abstractions and generalisations was avoided because the facts were seen to be obvious. The facts spoke for themselves, the meanings were closed and the statements were final. This category was constructed from the theme which read, 'like the factual, look for proof in the text about their assumptions about the outer world'. The factual responses were those which were statements, usually short and not speculations, assumptions, generalisations or opinions. They were usually responses to questions asked by the teacher so that the influence of the teacher was powerful in determining the type of response. The boys responded much more strongly than did the girls, almost twice as much. The boys' and the girls' responses differed according to the text which was being read and to the teacher who taught the text. The boys responded to the factual in *Peter* (Walker, 1991) and *Dougy* (Moloney, 1993) much more than did the girls, while the girls responded much more to the factual in *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992) than did the boys.

Table 5

Total Number of Factual Responses to the Texts	Boys	Girls
<i>Peter</i> (Walker, 1991)	53	26
<i>Looking for Alibrandi</i> (Marchetta, 1992)	12	17
<i>Dougy</i> (Moloney, 1993)	15	4

The responses, however, were much more likely to be to what was perceived as fact or knowledge in the texts, either in the plot or issues raised by the text. These responses usually did not link the facts of the text with the outside world. Many of the factual responses to the text were related directly to information in the text. The teacher asked for factual answers and these were given, mostly correctly sometimes incorrectly. For example the teacher asked, 'What is the paddock for Peter when he is alone?' and a boy answered, 'He goes slow, he likes it'. The information is available on pages three and four of the text. The question, 'Who is Mrs Minslow?' was answered by a girl, 'She is the cleaning lady and she is really nosy. She won't let Peter stay in bed', an answer which is available on page one of the text. Most of the factual answers were of this kind.

There were factual answers from the text which were inferred rather than directly stated in the text. For example, when the teacher asked, 'What is the mother like?' the girls gave answers like, 'She worries about him', 'She believes in Peter', and, '[She is] protective', answers which are not directly stated in the text.

Sometimes the students related facts in the text with life experiences. When the teacher asked the question, 'Is this a typical response about his son being gay?', a

boy answered, 'No, most fathers wouldn't do that', linking a fact from the text with a human experience. Similarly, when the teacher asked, 'Is this more likely to happen to boys?' referring to a specific incident in the text, a boy answered, 'To boys actually', confirming the interpretation of the text and linking it with life experiences. In a discussion of the way that the boys talk in the opening of the book *Peter* (Walker, 1991) one of the boys confirmed its accuracy linking it with his experiences by stating, 'We talk like this sometimes we do, when the girls are not there'.

The girls responded to the factual in *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992) more than the boys, yet the boys' response to the factual in the other two books was more prevalent than the girls. They liked providing information about girls perhaps because they thought they were providing information that the others did not know. They also liked giving facts about the character, Josephine Alibrandi. For example the girls were keen to provide information like, 'She is seventeen. She goes to a private school', 'She got it on a scholarship', 'She's smart', and, 'She does not like her name', all answers which are available on pages five to six in the text.

Although it was the teacher who asked the questions which invited closed answers, it was the boys who more willingly supplied factual answers. The boys preferred the factual answers which can be easily verified and from which they can have the pleasure of being right. They resisted ambiguity not wishing to hold competing meanings. For them it was a competitive environment in which the right answer is the important one. They privileged decontextualised detail where no contestation or alternative readings were required or acceptable. They liked certainty and wished to impose their truth on the world. For them truth was not negotiable whether or not their factual interpretations were right. They felt that facts stand by themselves and did not have to be justified. They did not have to be open to discussion and revision. What many of the boys wished to assert was the truth of their factual interpretation which, to them, was rational merely because they asserted it. For instance, for them, it was a fact that 'poofers are disgusting' and that this fact could not be contested. The acceptance of this fact then lead to a range of other legitimate behaviours towards homosexuality once it appeared to be accepted by the dominant in the group that homosexuality was disgusting and abhorrent. So it was accepted and not interrogated in the discussion that it is legitimate to shoot homosexuals or to beat them up once it appeared to be accepted that homosexuality is disgusting. They were uncomfortable with a position which can accept ambiguity, contradiction and contestation. For many boys the distinction between fact and opinion was blurred, so that if a fact is asserted strongly enough, then it must be true, 'homosexuality is disgusting'. Most of the girls were more interested in the exploration of the implications of factual incidents of the plot and speculations about them rather than the assertion of facts themselves.

5.4.6 Category 6: Make judgments

Category 6 ‘make judgments’ intended to capture the type of response which stated a strong opinion about a person, a character or the text. This category was constructed because of the importance that the boys placed on giving strong judgments. In this category there was only a slight difference between the numbers of responses of the boys and those of the girls. The boys made five more responses judgmentally than did the girls. Despite this, the researcher and teachers felt that it was an important category to retain because the boys’ judgments were given with a great deal more certainty and assurance than were the girls. The judgments were directed towards the people in the classroom, the characters in the texts and the texts themselves. There were judgments about people and behaviour and there were more of these than about characters in the text.

Table 6

Judgments Made About:	Number of responses	
	Boy	Girl
People	26	22
Characters	7	22
Book	7	7
Total	40	35

The girls usually empathised with the characters in the texts before making a judgment, whereas the boys more quickly jumped to an uncontextualised judgment. The judgments about people were usually strong especially from the boys. For example, one boy in response to *Peter* (Walker, 1991) said, ‘I do not think poofers are right. It’s disgusting’. It was without reflective consideration or contemplation that the boy concerned made this judgment. In contrast when a girl made a judgment about people it was usually contextualised, considered and explained. For example, ‘My Mum would understand. But I do not care what my Dad would say because I do not like him. I never have. He always goes off about everything’.

In response to a character in a text, one of the boys claimed, ‘Not really. He is wallowing in self-pity even when he does not know it’. This was an important example in that the boy concerned was sure that he could make a judgment about a character even when the character did not know it and the text did not necessarily reveal it. While the text legitimised the turmoil that the character Peter endured, the student was dismissive of the textual position and assumed a position of greater knowledge. Even when the girls made a judgment of a character, the comment was usually gentler and given a justification. For example, ‘She is the cleaning lady and she is really nosy. She won’t let Peter stay in bed’. As well the

girls made judgments which were complimentary. For example, 'She's calm, she's civilised, she's kind, she's generous'.

In commenting on the novel, *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992), both boys and girls made judgmental comments. The comments of the girls were positive. For example they said, 'I love this book. I have read seven chapters', and, 'I can't stop reading this book'. The boys made comments like, 'I don't like it much', 'The book sucks', and, 'I just did not like it at all. I didn't like the way it was written'. Subordinated masculinities maintain the illusion of hegemony through silence, so that the boys who liked this text were not able to say so because of the dominant masculine view. When the boys thought that the text represented hegemonic masculinity accurately, they were enthusiastic about it. For instance, they liked *Peter* (Walker, 1991) for the first couple of chapters. Once they suspected that homosexuality might be an issue they rejected the text.

5.5. Female Categories

5.5.1 Category 1: Do not see that they can act upon the world

Category 1 'do not see that they can act upon the world' intended to demonstrate instances when the students felt that they had little power or agency over their lives or control of the events of the world. This category clearly existed but there were few instances of it. Those instances were, however, significant. The absence of data confirms the existence of the category because it is about silence, passivity, compliance, agreeability and powerlessness which expresses itself through lack of assertion, aggression and willingness to act on or in the world, a hegemonic view of action which appeared to be endorsed by most of the girls.

There were only six instances from the girls and none from the boys. The first instance occurred in a discussion of sexuality when the teacher asked whether the girls were as secure about their sexuality as the boys appeared to be. Most of the girls responded, 'No'.

The next episode was particularly interesting as it was complex, contradictory and confusing. The class responded to the questions which invited them to say where they thought they would be and where they would dearly love to be at the age of twenty-five. The first response of Rebecca was, 'I'm going to be a taxi driver. I don't want a job. I want a good life'. In the view of the other students this was an impossible position for Rebecca to adopt as she had previously voiced her determination to be a lawyer or to work for the Tasmanian Green movement. As she voiced her thoughts, she contemplated the issue of her future and changed her mind several times as she spoke. In saying that she would be a taxi driver, she was either indicating that she had no control over her professional future by plucking

out what might appear to be a more accessible job and trying to trivialise the whole nature of work in contrasting a 'job' with a 'good life'. She could also have been asserting her disdain of work in general. This reading links with her next statement 'I don't want a job'. Here she may have been linking the notion of taxi driving with doing nothing in that it appears to be a job with little responsibility or intellectual effort. Because it is perceived as passive it is not really work nor is it really a job. She then linked the notion of not having a job with quality of life, to not have a job is to 'have a good life'. She claimed that 'I think I'll live happily on the dole'. These comments were in contradiction with her previously stated professional aims and could indicate the difficulty she had in asserting the possibility of her achieving her aims.

This contradiction was also evident in Rebecca's next response. She stated, 'I do want a job. I am going to live in Seattle. I want money. I do want money. I am going to marry someone who has a lot of money and I am going to live in a small, beautiful house. I am going to be happy'. She spoke tentatively and speculatively, working out what she wanted to do as she spoke. She indicated a desire to work, to have money and to live somewhere pleasant, but she could only see that she could achieve this by marrying someone with money. Each of these comments could be seen as acting on the world, but they could also indicate a passivity about her place in the world. Such dependence on a rich man she equated with happiness and acknowledged that it confirmed and reproduced subordination, lack of control over one's life, defeat and deference to those who intend to work for money and to achieve status, in her case a man.

Her classmate, Sarah, was astounded at the response of Rebecca and questioned her position as President of the Environment Committee. Sarah said 'She says she wants money so she is going to marry it? Why can't you get your own?' Rebecca did not respond to that challenge but showed Sarah her written list. Sarah said, 'She wrote she wants a small child!' Rebecca threw her list away and Sarah commented sarcastically and with disgust, 'Some President of the Environment Committee!'

Another comment which revealed a passivity towards the world was from Sarah, who said, despite her rigorous questioning of Rebecca, 'No, I don't want to work. I want to be comfortable and happy'. She later contradicted herself when she said, 'I would like to be an English teacher and take my kids to Sizzler's every day'. Sarah and Rebecca, though wanting different futures, both showed the extent to which they were embedded in the discourse of romance in which men are positioned as powerful, rich and active and women are positioned as dependent, nurturing, loving, happy and passive – a strange kind of liberal heterosexual feminism.

5.5.2 Category 2: Empathetic/ understanding reading of the world

In this category, empathy is taken to mean the capacity to understand or identify with the experiences, feelings, actions and events of people and their worlds. This category was constructed from an additional theme which was originally 'empathetic view of the world/empathy with the world' in Table 6. It was added when the text was interrogated to see whether or not the view of the world of the students centred around action. The transcripts revealed that some of the students, mainly girls, had a more empathetic view of the world. So this theme was added. When investigated closely it was seen that rather than being a view of the world it was more accurate to describe it as a reading of the world. To describe it as a reading implied that the process was more active, that meanings were being constructed rather than being apprehended, that the readings were in depth rather than superficial or surface and that the view was not static and fixed. The girls read the world in this way almost exclusively. In this way the category was constructed as 'empathetic/understanding reading of the world'.

In a discussion about masculinity, one of the girls said that an aspect of masculinity is that many boys are homophobic. She said that masculinity is 'Homophobic. You do not like poofs. You do not like to be different. You have to hate people who are gay because they are different'. She showed an empathetic insight into the male hegemonic position. She showed an awareness of the existence of a category of people who are anti-homosexual and acknowledged that people position themselves differently in relation to homosexuality. She appeared to be aware of the centrality of difference in the lives of people and in the construction of male hegemony. She indicated that she was aware of the importance of the maintenance of categories like masculinity and the risks involved if one did not conform. Although she was aware of the power of this position, it is not one she agreed with.

Comments which were typical of the girls were, 'Boys are not usually understanding of each other', and, 'Boys do not like best friends whereas girls do'. The girls identified that empathy is something that girls do whereas it is not something which boys do. In this way they made an acute observation about the gendered nature of empathy, while at the same time reproducing gendered mythologies. Of the boys, Sarah said, 'You would want to fit in', reinforcing an understanding of the importance for the boys to comply with male hegemony. Most of the boys in this class did not demonstrate empathy towards each other. Usually they did not listen to each other or to the girls. They asserted facts or opinions and silenced others both boys and girls by ignoring them. To be empathetic for a boy would be to question his masculinity. For a girl empathy is a quality which is part of a view of femininity which supports hegemonic masculinity through nurturance, compliance, service, compassion and accommodating the needs and desires of males. It positions girls to be subservient and less powerful.

When a girl said, 'It's a sympathetic view of different kinds of reality. You can't pretend they do not exist', she was at first referring to the text but she made a generalisation about what she thought was appropriate in her acceptance of a variety of sexualities, a position that the majority of the boys refused to accept.

The construction of masculinity for the boys did not include empathy. They expected the girls to be empathetic and reward instances of empathy from the girls but show disdain to any boy who demonstrates any form of understanding or sympathy. There are only two instances in the transcripts of the boys showing an empathetic understanding of the world. In response to the question, 'What if it is your brother or sister who is gay?' James replied, 'at first you might be a bit worried but after a while it would not matter'. Nick said 'People say they do not like poofers because they will come on to them but that it not true. They are not attracted to everyone'. In reply to Nick's statement of empathy towards homosexual behaviour there was a general murmuring of disagreement and a muffled statement from one of the boys that the only reason Nick made the statement was because he was gay. He was, in effect, silenced by the masculine hegemony in the class. The boys make their position very clear in opposition to James's statement. Perhaps for them, empathy implies a lack of action that the boys find difficult to accept. Most of them would prefer to take action to solve the problem rather than wasting time trying to understand it. It is not a discourse which appears to be easily available or attractive to them.

5.5.3 Category 3: Endorse the discourse of individual difference

Category 3, 'endorse the discourse of individual difference', referred to the right of individuals to hold a multiplicity of positions, sexual, moral, social and political. The girls endorsed the right of individual difference five times more than did the boys. This category is closely linked with Category 2 and the discourse of empathy, thus some of the examples will overlap.

For instance, Rebecca said, 'It's a sympathetic view of different kinds of reality. You can't pretend they do not exist', and Sarah said, 'I think it's the same as racism or people with blue or brown eyes, people are different. I do not think it makes any difference what you are.' While this comment can be read as a relativist discourse which conflates difference rather than endorsing it, both girls clearly supported the notion that people have a right to be what they want to be. The implication was that this choice should not harm others and if it did not, then it was acceptable.

There were only five responses from the boys which indicated a support for individual difference and it could be speculated that the boys might have been self-validating while the girls were other validating, but this was not clear from the readings of the data. It could be speculated that the boys' refusal to engage with the texts or their diversions from the text to discuss issues raised by themselves

was assertions of their own individual difference and in this way was self-validating. Perhaps the lack of direct acceptance of individual difference was partly due to the nature of the texts under scrutiny in that these texts did not raise issues that the boys wanted to endorse. Early in the reading of *Peter* (Walker, 1991), the boys appeared endorse the language of the boys in the trail bike paddock, but once the issue of potential homosexuality was raised then they were no longer interested in positions of individual difference. They demonstrated no interest in the romance nor in issues of Aboriginality in the other two texts. On the issue of homosexuality, Nick stated, ‘It should be their own choice. The Tasmanian law bans it but it should not be so’. However, when the teacher asks the class if it should be a criminal offence, the response was surprising and contradictory. They upheld the right of the individual under the law but refused to uphold the rights of choice of the individual.

Table 7

Homosexuality is a Criminal Offence	Responses
Disagree	19
Agree	5
Undecided	1
Not saying	1

Josh’s assertion of his right ‘not to say’ could be interpreted as an act of asserting the right of individual difference from the group. The overwhelming support for the right of the individual to chose to be homosexual was contradicted by a comment from a boy immediately after the voting when he said, ‘My Dad says they should all be shot’.

5.5.4 Category 4: Willing to note theoretical/ ideological implications of text, of life

Category 4 ‘willing to note theoretical/ ideological implications of text, of life’ intended to discover when the students recognised sets of ideas through which meanings are generated and were able to apply their readings to either the text or to life. This category was constructed from the Theme 7 Table 1, ‘reflective, willing to note assumptions, to consider theories and ideologies, theoretical/ ideological readers as opposed to practical ones’. The aim was to discover if the students were able to engage with the ideologies and theories implicit in the texts, acknowledge them and make comments on them, either about their position in the text or their implications for life. Hence the category became ‘willing to note theoretical/ ideological implications of text, of life’. The students generated theories from a recognition of the ideologies which were implicit in the texts and in life. The students did not discuss the ideologies explicitly but their ability to theorise about them could be read as an implicit recognition of them. The transcripts were

interrogated for the two processes, one the implications regarding the text and two the implications regarding life. With the text, the girls responded three times more than did the boys. With life, the girls responded seven times more than the boys. The questions of the teachers influenced how the students responded to this category. In the classes taken by the female teacher there were more responses linking theory with life, while in the male teacher's class the responses to text were more factual than theoretical.

The theoretical discussions tended to focus on issues of homosexuality, bisexuality, motherhood, equal opportunity, relationships, money and happiness, clothes, Aborigines, violence, killing animals, all discourses which support and make intelligible major ideological frameworks and assumptions.

In response to the text *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992) Loretta said, 'I liked it. It's real. It's true. It's what we'll be going through in a couple of years at HSC and all that'. For the student there was a close connection between text and life. The ideologies in her sense of her own life existed in the text, and the ideologies in the text confirmed her view of life. She is able to theorise about the ideologies that she perceived existed in the text, to discuss them and their relationship with life and confirm their apparent truth by relating them to her life. For her it appeared that the text and life were cross referential, as part of a mimetic value discourse, each was made valid by the existence of each other and each was understood because of their mutual relationship.

In reflecting on the discourse of homosexuality, the students theorised about the nature of homosexuality and the differences between male and female homosexuality. In response to a discussion of female sexuality in which the boys theorised that they thought that it was of a different order, less significant and less important than male sexuality, one male student said, 'People say they do not like poofers because they will come onto them. But that is not true. They are not attracted to everyone'. The first sentence 'People say they do not like poofers because they will come onto them' could be based on assumptions of a heterosexual discourse which sees women as sexual objects and constantly available to the male gaze. By 'people' he probably means 'men' and maybe 'people like me' that is 'male' and there is an implication that they are 'people' who are predatory, that they will 'come onto them' no matter what'. He contested this discourse when he said, 'But that is not true. They are not attracted to everyone'. Here he theorised about the nature of male sexuality, heterosexual and homosexual, positioning the male homosexual either in the female, heterosexual, romantic discourse in which mutual physical attraction with a special person is central or a discourse which may be a modification of the male sex drive discourse and is more selective. A male sex drive discourse homogenises women as sexual objects whereas the romance discourse particularises or personalises attraction. A female student endorsed either of the theories, the romance relationship or the

modification of the male sex drive discourse, when she said, 'Guys go for pretty girls and it is probably the same for gay guys.'

A female student then tried to shift the grounds of the theoretical debate and perhaps challenged the binary of the straight/gay guy debate. This is part of the gender dynamic that is occurring between the students as the girl not only responds to the text but confronts the boys it seems. She said, 'A lot of guys are bi-sexual, are you worried about that? There are meant to be as many bi-sexual men'. She theorised that there were many more complex, complicated and multiple positions than a mere heterosexual/homosexual binary. This comment was re-enforced by the girls comment, 'There is a street in Sydney called Oxford Street where gay-guys are normal', which challenged the normal/abnormal binary.

Later in a discussion of whether or not one could admit to one's parents that one was gay, one of the girls theorised, 'I think it's different for girls because you do not think of girls being gay. It's more associated with guys even though it's probably even in numbers'. This comment linked with the mythology that female sexuality does not matter so much, that it could be invisible or that a greater range of choice is available for females. This linked with the idea that male sexuality is unmarked. For women the move from one marked category 'female' to another marked category 'gay' is not as significant as the move for a male from an unmarked category 'male' to an marked category 'gay'. For women this is further complicated by the fact that women are positioned within a romantic discourse which associates sex with love. That the girls were able to theorise that 'you do not think of girls being gay' may result from a discourse of female sexuality, available to both the boys and the girls that position girls as either non-sexual or asexual. This was supported by the comment from a girl, 'I don't think fathers worry so much about girls and lesbians'.

Perhaps when the girls theorised about the ideologies implicit in the texts they did so in an empathetic discourse which showed understanding and deferred judgment and action, whereas for the boys it could have seemed that their responses to the implicit ideologies were theorised as matters of fact or opinion. It could be speculated that for the boys to consider theories was empowering and confirmed their view that they could act upon the world whereas the girls, while empathetic, reproduced a learned helplessness. In a discussion of the torment of Peter in *Peter* (Walker, 1991), one of the girls said, 'You feel sorry for him. None of his friends are gay', to which a boy replied, 'Not really. He is wallowing in self-pity even when he does not know it'. The girl theorised about the discourse of homosexuality, which for them had implications for notions of difference, isolation, loneliness, exclusion from a peer group, ridicule and societal expectations. The boy's comment was judgmental and showed no concern for a person who might be in torment. He theorised that Peter was wallowing in self-pity even though the text does not necessarily position the reader to accept that point of view. It could be speculated that the text works very hard to position the

readers as sympathetic towards Peter yet this student was resistant to this position. His judgment was based on a superior knowing. He knew more than the character was allowed to reveal. His theory was both judgmental and delivered as a matter of fact.

5.5.5 Category 5: Enrol in the narrative

Category 5 'enrol in the narrative', implied that the readers became part of the narrative as they read. The theme for this category read, 'they are part of the narrative/as if they are one or more of the characters/enrol in the narrative'. They were categorised as 'enrol in the narrative'. It is possible that the reader might identify closely with one of the characters but the process is usually much more complex than this. The readers become involved with the narrative, perhaps finding themselves compelled to read on to find out what is happening next. They demonstrate some commitment to the narrative, accepting it with a suspension of disbelief. They accept the text, developing a sense of intimacy with it and become part of it while they are reading.

Enrolling in the narrative is very like the category which reads, 'talk about the characters in the text as if they are real'. Enrolling in the narrative is more than this, as it includes involvement through reading in the world of the narrative, identifying with the characters, participating and empathising. It is important to make a distinction in the category between the ways in which the boys tended to enrol and the way that the girls were inclined to enrol. What seemed like enrolment from the girls often appeared like a factual answer from the boys as the boys asserted their responses in an authoritative tone of voice. It was often difficult to make the distinction. The girls' involvement was empathetic and sympathetic while the boys was factual and judgmental. The aim of the category was to discover how much the students were enrolled in the text as they were reading and close scrutiny revealed that the girls were much more inclined than the boys to be involved in the narrative. The girls demonstrated the process four times more than did the boys. Their enrolment included activities which are evidenced in the other categories. Empathy and enrolment are closely connected activities because it is expected that if readers are able to be empathetic, then it follows that they might have the willingness to enrol in the narrative. However, it was important to interrogate the transcripts for both processes.

In order to demonstrate how the enrolment process worked, a small section of the transcript follows. It is a discussion of the text *Peter* (Walker, 1991).

Teacher	Why did Mrs Minslow cut like she did?
Boy 1	She thought they were gay.
Boy 2	She assumed automatically that something was going on.

- Girl 1 She thought David might have been influencing Peter because she knows David is gay.
- Girl 2 Is David gay?
- Girl 1 No, there is nothing wrong with holding someone of the same sex.
- Teacher If it was two girls hugging what would she do?
- Girl 4 It would not matter.
- Girl 1 If she had not known David was gay she might not have worried.
- Teacher Interesting.
(Pause)
- Teacher Why did Peter wish that David was nasty to him?
- Girl 4 So he would not be attracted to him.
- Teacher Might be. What might happen? What might Mrs Minslow do?
- Girl 6 She might think David is trying to take advantage of Peter.
- Teacher Do you think she might think Peter is gay?
- Girl 1 No, because he is too young.

The episode demonstrated how the students enrolled in the narrative. The girls' responses were more speculative, indicating a thoughtful involvement in the narrative. One of them said, 'She thought David might have been influencing Peter because she knows David is gay'. There was a sense of exploring human motive in her comment and an inference that Mrs Minslow knew David was gay. There was a further inference that just because David was holding Peter that this might influence his sexuality. The following comment from a girl was, 'If she had not known David was gay she might not have worried', showed deep enrolment in the narrative because of the considered depth of her speculations. It appeared that she was thinking deeply enough about the events of the narrative to make a thoughtful suggestion about an alternative possibility.

When a girl answered that, 'So he would not be attracted to him', perhaps it was a speculation about the motives of the character Peter and the feelings that he might have had. It linked with events later in the text but was a connection the girl was able to make in a speculative way.

When another girl said, 'She might think David is trying to take advantage of Peter', she too demonstrated the willingness to speculate, putting what happened into a language which revealed her involvement in the narrative.

Finally, when a girl made the comment, 'No, because he is too young', her enrolment was evident by the concern she expressed about Peter's youth. The text positions the reader to accept that Peter is young and that he is concerned about

his potential sexuality though this is not explicitly stated in the text. The girl's comment demonstrates that she was involved enough in the narrative to be able to make the connections between the hints that the author provided and to speculate about the character, Peter's, sexuality.

For the boys, who had already established the fact that Peter was gay, their comments, while they show enrolment in the narrative, can be read to be at a more factual and superficial level. The boys said, 'She thought they were gay', and, 'She assumed automatically that something was going on'. These were both delivered as if they were statements of fact. The responses were shorter, more direct and less speculative indicating a more surface enrolment in the narrative.

5.5.6 Category 6: Tentative

The tentative response is one which is not closed, is provisional, cautious and perhaps experimental, trying out an idea without stating it as fact. It was not intended to include a tone of delivery which is hesitant, timid, faltering or diffident. This category was constructed from the theme in Table Six which read 'use of the subjunctive, words like *might*, *probably*, *it seems*, *you're right but* and *and yet*'. When the transcripts were examined closely, it was seen that this use of language could be included in a larger category of tentativeness, which would incorporate more specific use of words like 'might', 'probably', 'maybe' and 'it seems'. The girls were more inclined to be tentative, using tentative language approximately three times more than the boys.

In a discussion of the influence of David on Peter in the novel *Peter* (Walker, 1991) the girls made comments like, 'She thought David might have been influencing Peter because she knows David is gay', and, 'She might think David is taking advantage of Peter', whereas a boy's comment on the same issue was, 'She assumed automatically that something was going on'. The text does not make explicit what 'she' thought, the girls admit that their way of interpreting the event is only one way of interpreting it and there might be others, whereas the boy seemed to have assumed an authoritative reading of the text.

In the process of talk, the girls appeared to be comfortable in working out possible meanings whereas the boys appeared to be more comfortable with closing meaning. When the teacher introduced a discussion of the believability of the characters and asked, 'What is a normal mother?' the girls discussed it willingly, making comments like, 'She is a person who loves and cares for you no matter what you say and do'. Eventually a boy said, 'That's a stupid question'. The boy's comment could be read as a refusal to engage with the text and close the discussion or a realisation that the question was stupid, but one of the girls said, 'Because maybe he thinks there is no such thing'. She was attempting to reconstruct possible meanings in a tentative way for the boy who was not willing to do so himself. It

was unlikely that she would agree with this interpretation but she was willing to suggest that this might be a possibility for the boy.

In a discussion of the novel *Dougy* (Moloney, 1993) about financial support for an Aboriginal girl, Gracey, who has been chosen to run in the state athletic finals, there was some objection both in the text and from the students to handouts for Aboriginals. Objecting to this speculation one of the girls said tentatively, 'It is probably not because she is black, it's because she is a good runner'. While this comment can be read as empathetic, it is used here to demonstrate a tentative suggestion.

The boys used tentative language but not nearly so much as the girls. They made comments like, 'If my father thought I was gay, he might be worried about it', 'At first you might be a bit worried but after a while it would not matter', and, 'It seems unfair that the parents get to know because she is black'. Each of the responses revealed a tentativeness. The last one, however, was ambiguous. He could mean that the parents' objection in *Dougy* (Moloney, 1994) seemed unfair and that it might have been better if the parents had not found out. Here, meaning appeared provisional and tentative but the addition of the words, 'because she is black' complicated the interpretation. It was hard to decide what he intended as the use of 'because' usually links the reason with the first statement. The use of 'because she is black' did not help decide on the provisional status of the first half of the response.

5.5.7 Category 7: Speculate and elaborate

Category 7 was 'speculate and elaborate'. To speculate in this context was to generate a range of possible meanings from the text and to go beyond the text and bring meanings which might be barely suggested, to articulate what was implicit in the text, to fill in the textual gaps with social and cultural knowledge and experience, to conjecture, consider, reflect, wonder and meditate. Elaboration was to explain, expand, clarify, justify, illustrate and ground the speculation in fact or example. The two processes were linked because it was thought that the process of speculating would involve elaboration. This was not always the case. The girls speculated and elaborated much more than did the boys. The girls elaborated to justify their positions, to illuminate their speculations and to explain their suggestions. The boys speculated but they did not elaborate in the same ways used by the girls. Often they did not elaborate or their elaborations were not as connected with their speculations as were those of the girls.

When the students were asked what they thought about the book, *Peter* (Walker, 1991), one of the female students replied, 'There is nothing wrong with the subject. People have to come to terms with that. It is a boy coming to terms with his sexuality ... It is a sympathetic view of different kinds of reality. You can't pretend they do not exist'. Her speculation that, 'There is nothing wrong with the

subject', with reference to homosexuality, is elaborated with justifications and examples from experience. Her comment, 'There is nothing wrong with the subject', was based on the speculation that some readers would find something abhorrent about the subject. This was the case for many of the boys so she was both speculating and justifying, taking up a different position to the text than the one taken by most of the boys in the class. Her speculation at this stage in the discussion potentially opened her to criticism yet she elaborated her position clearly. There is nothing in the text which gets near to stating that the book is a 'sympathetic view of different kinds of reality'. Yet this female student was able to speculate that this was what the text was about and that it concerned 'a boy coming to terms with his sexuality', an idea which is not directly stated in the book. Her speculations, which articulate what is an implicit reading of the text, were intermingled with justifications and explanations.

There were other responses which were speculative and barely suggested by the text. One of the female students, when commenting on whether or not the character, Peter, could be gay said, 'No, because he is too young'. Here, her speculation is remote from the text in that the text is exploring the possibility of an alternative sexuality for Peter and she has rejected this possibility on the ground that he is too young. This speculation appeared to be more influenced by her experience of the world rather than from examples in the text. For example, when Peter phoned the counsellor at the crisis centre the advice he received was suggestions about what he could do. There was no suggestion that he might be too young to consider homosexuality. Another female student commented, 'He does not even know what it is to be gay', and when the teacher asked her what the photographs meant that were used in the text as part of Peter's quest to discover if he is gay, she replied, 'That does not mean he is gay. He is so confused. He is too young'. She speculated that just because he looked at photographs of men in a magazine it did not follow that he was gay and she also suggested that he was too young.

The boys' speculations on meaning were often short and mostly unelaborated. When the question was asked, 'What sort of a person is Vince?' a boy replied, 'He knows everything'. The comment was highly speculative and barely suggested by the text but it was not elaborated. It could have been a helpful and interesting speculation if it had been elaborated. When the teacher asked, 'What is Tony?' a boy replied, 'He's a legend'. To be a legend is an idea which is not mentioned in the book. The boy has drawn on his personal knowledge, taxonomies and experience to speculate that the character, Tony, is 'a legend' but he did not elaborate to explain what he meant. The speculation could have the effect of excluding those who might not understand the idiomatic meaning implied in the word 'legend'. There is little evidence in the text to suggest that Tony has a legendary status so perhaps all he intended was that he liked the character. Perhaps the response of one of the female students explained it, 'He is straight', she replied sarcastically, and, although implicitly invited, the boy did not contest her reply. This could

mean that he agreed with her, that he could not be bothered elaborating his speculation or that his contempt was intended to silence her.

There were occasions where the boys elaborated their speculations about possible meanings in the text. For example, when the teacher asked, 'Is it a gang?' a boy replied 'No, not really. They are just a bunch of guys who hang around together'. He speculated that the group of boys was not a gang and elaborated on that speculation. He did not explain, however, his contention that the boys are not a gang because he did not explain the distinctions between a group of boys and a gang.

In a discussion about the text *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992), one of the boys speculated on the reasons why the students might not like the character, Josephine. In response to another student, at first disagreeing and then elaborating, he said, 'Not really. They do not like her because her Mum had a child and she was not married'.

5.5.8 Category 8: Talk about the characters in the text as if they are real

The assumption of this category is that the characters in the text are spoken about as if they are real people, autonomous and freely choosing individuals, and not as if they are textual constructions. It sees the characters as not detached from real life discourses and mythologies. In Table 1.2, the theme read, 'identify, participate, empathise with plot, character and the world of the text as if they are real'. This theme was refined in Table 3.2 to read, 'talk about the characters as if they are real'. The word 'empathise' was omitted because of the existence of a separate category of empathy. Identification was omitted as it was concluded that this process was part of empathising. 'Plot' and 'the world created by the text' was subsumed into the category of text. The word 'talk' was used because it was considered that the only way of accessing the mental processes of the students was through their talk as evidenced in the transcripts. Hence the category became, 'talk about the characters as if they are real'. The girls responded to this category twice more than did the boys. There were many examples of this category. It appeared that this discourse was so naturalised that both teachers and students would be highly resistant to an alternative discourse.

A small excerpt from the transcript in a discussion of *Peter* (Walker, 1991) revealed the ways in which the students assumed that the characters were real. The discourse which existed about the characters treated them as if they were real and not as textual constructions. Although character distinctions are important as part of the plot devices in narrative, this was not part of the discourse of textual discussion. The questions of the teacher naturalised the discourse which positioned the characters as real and the students were complicit in the adoption of this discourse.

- Girl 1 Peter has gone to a paddock to ride a bike. They are picking on Eddie. They pick on Peter and he goes home.
- Boy 1 He likes to fit in.
- Girl 2 He does not really do anything.
- Teacher How is he different?
- Boy 2 He is not tough like Gaza.
- Boy 3 He gets good marks and he does not stick up for himself. 8
- Teacher What is he good at?
- Boy 1 English.

In this discussion the teacher and the students discussed the characters in the same way that they would discuss people they know. There was nothing in the transcript to suggest that the characters were constructions in a text. The discussion was so naturalised that to them there seemed to be no other way to talk about the characters.

- Teacher Tell us about Alice.
- Boy 1 He is a bit of a poof?
- Girl 1 He is quiet.

This example typified what both teacher and students discussed in relation to the characters. The teacher does not lead the students to the idea of character as integral to the functions of narrative. Even when the teacher did not instigate the discussion the response of the students was the same. For instance, a boy asked 'Who is Mrs Minslow?' To this a girl replied, 'She is the cleaning lady and she is really nosy. She won't let Peter stay in bed'.

What was significant in this category was the large number of responses to it and the fact that the girls responded to it twice as much as the boys. This suggested that all the students were deeply embedded in this discourse. The girls, who had demonstrated a more intimate and empathetic engagement with the texts in previous categories, were potentially more located and fixed within the discourse than were the boys.

5.5.9 Category 9: Interact with the text

Category 9 was intended to capture how many times the students responded to the text as opposed to making other comments. In Table 1.2 the theme read, 'interact with the text much more, see the subtleties of construction of the text and the

characters’, through comparison with the other categories it became, ‘interact with the text’. It was not obvious that the students could see the subtleties of the text or that the subtleties mattered to them. Perhaps they could see them when invited to do so by the teacher but in the main they were not interested. It then became clear that there were two processes, one to do with the interaction with the text and two concerning seeing the text and the characters as constructions. The latter became Category 10. So Category 9 became, ‘interact with text’. In this category it was only the responses to the text which were counted. There were responses in the transcripts other than responses to the text. Table 8 shows how many times the students responded in the discussion of the text, both to the text itself and in general discussion around the text.

Table 8

Responses to three narrative texts	Boy	Girl	Total
<i>Peter</i> (Walker, 1991)	154	195	343
<i>Looking For Alibrandi</i> (Marchetta, 1992)	88	139	227
<i>Dougy</i> (Moloney, 1993)	48	70	118

With each of the narrative texts the girls responded more than the boys and there were many more responses to the text *Peter* (Walker, 1991) than to *Looking for Alibrandi*, (Marchetta, 1992) or to *Dougy* (Moloney, 1993) as a result of the interest shown by the students in the text and the time that the teachers had to spend on each text.

Table 9

Responses, including interaction with text	Boy	Girl	Teacher
Interact with text	121	248	
Total responses	290	404	463

What was evident in Table 9 was that the interaction with the text was approximately half what the total responses were. The other responses were accounted for in Categories 1, 2, 4, and 5 for the boys and 1, 2, and 11 for the girls. The category was analysed in terms of the other categories. The interaction with the text is only significant in that the girls responded to this much more than did the boys and the teacher made more responses than either the boys or the girls.

5.5.10 Category 10: See characters and text as constructions

This category explored the willingness of the students to recognise that both the text and the characters were discursively produced. This category could be seen to be in tension with Category 8; however, because the text or the characters as constructions were rarely discussed, this appeared not to be the case. All students responded to this category only when invited to by the teacher and the girls responded more to this category than did the boys.

The students were willing to enter the discourse when invited to by the teacher. For instance, when the teacher said, 'We are trying to see if we believe in these characters', she could have been inviting the students to see the characters as constructions through her use of the word 'character'. An issue of importance here was that the word 'character' for most students could be replaced with the word 'people', itself a discursive construction of a different kind, so that the students could have read the question as an invitation to discuss the characters as real. The teacher did not encourage the discussion to continue and what ensued was a discussion of normal mothers with an attempt to link what it is to be a normal mother with the mother in the text. So the emphasis was on how the characters represented what the students believed to be real. While there was an oblique reference to character it was not developed. The teacher's questions following this initial question did not seek to encourage the students to see either the text or the characters as constructions but to enter the discourse of the world of the text and the characters as real.

In the discussion of *Dougy* (Moloney, 1993) the teacher asked 'Was it necessary that Raymond was shot?' The students saw that this was a device of the plot to further the action. When the teacher asked, 'Why did Moloney have Kendall killed? Perhaps it would be better to have Cooper killed?' attention was drawn to decisions made by the author. One of the female students responded, 'No, the characters are too different. They would not have said the opposite things'. She seemed to believe that the characters were real people and that it would have been out of character for them to behave differently. While the teacher attempted to draw attention to the construction of the characters as narrative devices, the students are drawn to the discourse of the text and characters as real. They are so lodged in the discourse of the characters as real that while they can acknowledge to the teacher that the characters are constructions, it is difficult to determine how much they do see the characters as discursively constructed. They see the narrative as a slice of life because it appears that it can be validated in the real world. The distinction between what is constructed and what is real seems insignificant and unimportant to the students. There is little space in the discourse of the students to see the characters as constructions although they will acknowledge to the teacher that there is.

The teacher said, 'What I am trying to get you to think about is that Moloney chooses to have Tiny there. Would it be different if he had chose someone else?'

The girls tried to engage with the discourse of construction that the teacher invited but the discussion was never sustained because the students resist the discourse and revert to a discussion of the text as real.

5.5.11 Category 11: Divert from text to discuss Issues raised by the teacher

This category resulted from the theme which read, 'divert from text to discuss what they think about issues raised'. Close reading of the transcripts revealed that there were many responses which diverted from the text but that many of the diversions, were instigated by the teacher. When it was the teacher who encouraged the diversion the girls responded much more than did the boys. Typically, the teacher made a comment on the text and then invited the students to link the text with their own experience as part of the dominant pedagogical discourse in the classroom of Personal Growth.

In the discussion of the language used by the boys when they ride their trail bikes in the paddock in *Peter* (Walker, 1991), the discussion first focused on whether or not the language used by the boys in the text is believable, realistic or exaggerated. Perhaps in order to include the girls in the discussion the teacher asked, 'Girls, are there times when girls talk like this when the boys are not there?' Although this could be seen as a closed question it was not interpreted like this by the girls who elaborated the answers into a discussion of friendship which was barely linked with the text. The teacher invited the students to make such connections between the text and life many times in the transcripts. Other examples were, 'What about if a girl's name was put on a bus shelter as being lesbian?', 'Who has had an experience similar to this? One where you have been hassled?', 'How would you react?', 'Where does most of our knowledge of sex come from?', 'Would you be able to tell your mother if you were gay?' 'Do you find that mothers heal breaches?' and, 'What is a good mother?' There were many questions like this and the female students responded to them in elaborated ways and with more enthusiasm than did the boys. Most of the diversions concerned issues which interested the students and which they were willing to discuss.

The discussions, which included homosexuality, sexuality, motherhood, fatherhood, race, ethnicity, Aboriginality, illegitimacy, suicide and violence, were initiated both by the text and the questions of the teacher but they were not closely connected with the text. They were discussions of the views of the students on the issue and rarely directly connected with the text. So the discussions were not textual deconstructions of the way the issues were presented in the texts, rather they were discussions of how the students constructed the issues. The discourses of textual response they have learned did not require nor allow them to use textual examples to support their views.

5.5.12 Category 12: Make comparisons with narrative texts/ TV

It was assumed that the students would make comparisons of the texts with other books they had read and with television programs and films they had viewed. This was not done to the extent that was anticipated; however, the category was included partly because of the small number of responses which seemed surprising and because the girls used print text as a comparison more than the boys, while the boys commented more on TV, film and video. The small number of responses could be attributed to the questions that the teacher asked and to the privileging of real life over textual constructions or representations.

One of the girls used a film to illustrate what she meant by the term 'slag'. The girls suggested that their knowledge of sexuality came from magazines while the boys suggested that theirs came from films like *Basic Instinct*. One of the girls made a comparison with the TV series *Brides of Christ*. One of the boys mentioned a James Bond Junior film and the girls willingly discussed a range of books they had read.

Because the students did not engage with a discourse which treated narrative texts as constructions, they were not in a position to make comparisons of one textual construction with another or to discuss the construction of the text itself. They did not comment on the characters or events as textual constructions and compare them with other textual constructions. Rather they discussed the texts as if they were real. Even when the teacher tried to question the text as a construction the students answered as if they were discussing real life. Hence they did not have available to them the discourse or were not willing to make comparisons with other textual constructions, like TV, film or print texts. The students appeared to make no distinction between popular cultural, realist texts and life. For the students all texts, including life, are cross-referential and confirm or not their readings of life. Therefore they are not open to speculation about the possibilities of multiple readings and comparisons of one text with another. It was significant that the students did not appear to have a discourse which would enable them to discuss the text as one particular form of cultural construction which could be compared with others, hence the category remained.

5.6 Selective Coding

5.6.1 Integration of Categories

The selective coding process began with integrating the categories. As a process it represented the step between creating a list of categories and producing dominant discourses. What was constructed from the process of interrogating the categories to discover patterns and relationships were six major discourses. The process was

empirical, the transcripts were interrogated and examples of themes counted, refined as categories and re-articulated as discourses.

5.6.2 Construction of Discourses

In this process the categories were regrouped as a number of discourses. The term 'discourse' here referred to a particular form of language use which separated itself from other uses of language and was a systematically organised set of statements, defining what it was possible to say. These sets of attributes were understood as co-ordinates of subjectivity where they were discursively produced properties of discursively produced subjects. All students had access to most of the discourses. The differences were the way in which the students demonstrated their willingness to use the discourses, the extent to which they were embedded in one or another of them and the extent to which they were positioned to take up the discourses.

5.7 Six Discourses

5.7.1 The Discourse of Detection

This discourse is a combination of Category Two for the boys 'action/surface reading of the world', and Category Five for the boys, 'like the factual and avoid abstractions and generalisations'. This discourse is one in which when the readers were reading, they read the surface of the texts for facts, key ideas and information. It became clear that many of the students enjoyed finding and discussing facts in the text with a predilection for discussing surface events and the action that takes place. The avoidance of abstractions and generalisations suggested a partiality for a surface reading of the world and the world of the text. The action discussed was read as if it were a replication of worldly action. It was a discourse of deduction, fact-finding and finding solutions. It was information-seeking and prioritised surface action. The discourse positioned the reader to skim the surface, to look for clues, to find out without commitment and to develop a fixed position on the first reading. Closure was quickly reached. It assumed that a text has a fixed meaning and that first assumptions can be legitimately read as final. The text was skimmed for evidence that it potentially reflected the world view of the reader. As the world view of the boys prioritised action, then their engagement with the text was action oriented. For many of the boys the text was at the periphery. They were at the centre of their worlds and expected that the text would prioritise their views. The discourse of detection privileged the rational, assuming that if the facts were known, an opinion was justified, decisions can be made and actions can be taken. It was a discourse which was preferred by the boys. The girls were equally able, though less inclined, to use it unless encouraged by the teacher. They did not privilege facts in the same way that the boys appeared to. The facts were used by the girls as a basis for the proliferation of meanings, whereas the boys used the facts to close down meaning.

This discourse emerges from the importance for many of the students to detect and discuss facts in the text, making deductions and finding solutions. It is combined with a predisposition to discuss surface events and the action that takes place in texts. It is information seeking and prioritises surface action. The discourse allows the reader to skim the surface, in a detached way, to look for clues and to find answers. Both boys and girls read for the information but they respond to the information in different ways and they do different things with it. As with the research of Rogers Cherland (1994) both the boys and the girls use the discourse of feeling and the discourse of action. But the girls are more inclined to use the discourse of feeling, even when the narrative is plot focused, while the boys are more inclined to use the discourse of action (Rogers Cherland, 1994:144).

The issue from the transcripts which best demonstrates the extent to which the boys are embedded in a discourse of detection is that of homosexuality. The issue of homosexuality is the intentional and unresolved mystery of the book, *Peter* (Walker, 1993). The responses of the boys to the issue differ from that of the girls. Both boys and girls are willing to talk about the issue but they use very different discourses to do so. In Sarland's study both boys and girls are willing to talk about opposite sex homosexuality, but the boys refuse to discuss male homosexuality while 'the girls are more equivocal and more prepared to discuss both' (Sarland, 1991:71). Both boys and girls tended to see explicit description of sexuality as pornographic, especially if they were homosexual descriptions (Sarland, 1991:71). In the present research the boys quickly reveal a closed attitude to homosexuality whereas the girls are much more willing to be empathetic and understanding. The boys detect that the title character in *Peter* (Walker, 1991) is homosexual in contradiction to the way the character is positioned unresolvedly in the text, and proceed to read for confirmation of the facts and for the action. The boys tend to read the three narrative texts (Marchetta, 1992; Moloney, 1993; Walker, 1991) used in the research in this way.

The boys are embedded in this discourse and claim that one of the main reasons that they read narrative texts is to find information. The boys prefer to operate at the surface level in their discussion of narrative texts, in fact, the narrative nature of the texts does not appear to matter to many of the boys in their interactions in the English classroom. The boys recount what they perceive as facts in the texts. They extract the facts they like and make those facts the meaning of the text. They use the text to probe for the information they expect and would like to be there. There are resonances with Sarland's study in which boys 'project themselves into the generalised categories and relationships offered by the texts as empty spaces, almost, to be occupied by readers', while for girls, 'the detail of the text reaches into the lives of the readers in such a way that they find the text reflected in their own lives. Hence the distinction between the boys finding themselves in the text and the boys finding the text in themselves' (Sarland, 1991:85). The boys colonise the text, while the girls use it for the possibilities it offers for reflection.

The boys enjoy the action in the text, *Peter* (Walker, 1991), particularly the details of trail bike riding which confirm aspects of hegemonic masculinity. They make comments about masculinity which reveal what they think is appropriate behaviour for boys. The boys say that to be masculine they have to be 'Tough, ride a motor bike, spit, piss on trees', 'Piss on trees' and reveal 'Suicidal mania'. They also look for information which describes aspects of homosexuality. To the question, 'How does a macho bloke run?', the boys find the following answers, 'They flex their muscles and tense their bodies and look strong', and, 'Like a poofy person'. The answer to the question, 'How do poofy people run?' is, 'Like macho men'. There is humour in the interchange, the boys like the coherence and the circular nature of the responses and yet it seems that there is still a desire, important to them, to probe for facts and to find facts which confirm their versions of the world, in this case homosexuality. Because their reading is a surface one they do not appear to worry about the contradictions in their assertions. For the boys, the facts appear autonomous and because the boys do not interrogate each other, the status of the facts is never questioned. Rather, the boys implicitly support the authority of the statements of the other boys by not challenging them. There is no debate, no negotiation and no real discussion. In the interaction the boys do not contest each others' statements of the facts and neither does the teacher. The girls are silenced in the interaction. The statements of the boys, in the main, go uninterrogated and they are left thinking that they are right.

The students used the narrative texts for different purposes. Sometimes narratives can be 'quite simply informative, telling them about feelings and sensations in straightforward and direct language and narrative, giving them information not available elsewhere' (Sarland, 1991:73). In this way the author and the text position the reader to believe that information in texts is available and true. For many of the boys there is no debate about the information they believe is in the text. In the discussion of *Peter* (Walker, 1991) they make comments like, 'He's a bit of a poof', 'I do not think poofers are right. It's disgusting'. So, once they assume that the homosexuality of Peter is a fact, they can then make whatever comments they like about the fact, assuming its truth.

Some narrative devices allow a boy reader to read fiction as if it is non-fiction, they 'allow him to set one view against another, and free him, as a reader, to come to his own decisions' (Sarland, 1991:87). Not all male readers find this to be the case. For some of them all texts are read as non-fiction despite the fact that if they are asked, they can recognise different genres. For others complex and varied narrative devices interfere with the meanings and the pursuit of fact that appeals to most boy readers. For some readers, mostly the boys, however, the use of a range of narrative devices within the one text is irritating, 'feeling they got in the way of the *real story*' (Sarland, 1991:87).

Boys are concerned with plot, with what happens in the story. 'It thus reflected a desire to find meaning in the action occurring in a story rather than in any of the story's human relationships or literary stylistic devices' (Rogers Cherland, 1994:140). Rogers Cherland found that the discourse of action has six characteristics, it appealed to the reader's sense of logic, it was a discourse of legality, it defined characters in terms of what they did rather than what they felt, it looked for clues to character in actions and in external circumstances, it valued realism and credibility, exciting and interesting action was highly valued (Rogers Cherland, 1994). The boys reading *Peter* (Walker, 1991) reject the title character to reconstruct his thinking in the text, because when he is describing his thoughts he is not taking action, according to them. His status as male is seriously undermined by his unwillingness to have sex. Because he reflects on his reluctance and his desire for sexual experiences to be meaningful for him, his sexuality is questioned by many of the boys in the class and is shown to be in serious jeopardy. 'He's a bit of a poof' is typical of the comments they make.

Boys and girls can get very different meanings from the same text. If facts are discovered by the boys which are unpalatable to them, they tend to ignore or reject them. For most of the boys, the text *Peter* (Walker, 1991) is about homosexuality and they ignore information which might suggest that it is a more complex text. For many of the girls, *Peter* is about the questioning of sexuality, a more open position. Sarland's study provides an interesting comparison. The girls thought that one of the scenes in a popular cultural text called, *The Fog*, was very funny. It involves male masturbation and the severing of a penis with some shears. None of the boys think that the scene is funny. The girls are able to disrupt the scene and reveal the absurdity which lies beneath it. 'The same material is susceptible to different readings, in some cases it was mutually exclusive readings, and I have suggested that those differences are rooted in gender-differentiated cultural points of view' (Sarland, 1991:54). In this study, as in that of Sarland (1991) boys and girls take up different positions towards the texts and produce different readings as a result.

Girls 'find things in the book which enable them to read it differently from boys. They exploit, in other words, the plurality of the text' (Sarland, 1991:51). Girls are able to read against the ideological closure of certain texts. 'There are texts, and readings, where the girls do not so much read different parts of the texts from the boys, as read the same parts with quite contrary effects' (Sarland, 1991:51).

For most of the boys, the life of a female character in the romance, who is striving to achieve a man and who has to endure the rigours of romance ideology, is not considered by the boys to be a life of action. For most of the boys, it is only the things that boys do which constitute action, while the girls are willing to include different versions of action. The boys like to take action and to see the actions they like replicated in the texts. They make comments like, 'I would beat him up but he is a bit big. I would like to beat him up', 'Yes. I would beat him up and if it

made no difference I would beat him up again', 'Yes, I'd smash his balls in if it were me. Even if it was my brother', and, 'He would jump off the bridge'. Most of the boys do not reflect about issues concerned with homosexuality. They firmly, sometimes aggressively, state ways of handling it, getting rid of it and in doing so making links between what they considered to be facts in the text and life.

The action discussed is read as if it was a replication of worldly action. The reader 'needs to share a knowledge of the world, a cultural repertoire with the text in order to take that text on board' (Sarland, 1991:94). Readers might reject a text because they cannot do these things. The boys read texts for a correspondence with their reality and if they cannot find this, they tend to reject the text. If they do not reject it they often struggle to find the meanings they expect and want. For the girls, the story that best represents reality for them is the romance as represented by *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992). The romance story-line is saturated with the cultural repertoire in which girls are embedded so that they can enrol in the text and reflect on its meanings. Both boys and girls like texts which fulfil their genre expectations. Boys like books which draw 'on common knowledges of the world and of other texts' (Sarland, 1991:70). They like books which fulfil their genre expectations and other textual expectations which help them to read the text. They are frustrated if their expectations are unfulfilled (Sarland, 1991:70). Because *Peter* (Walker, 1991) does not fulfil the genre expectations set up in the opening chapters for the boys, they feel cheated and reject the text.

The discourse of detection is a discourse of deduction, fact-finding and finding solutions. It is information-seeking and prioritises surface action. The discourse positions the reader to skim the surface, to look for clues and to find out. Most of the boys in the study read for the facts they want to find. If the facts are not immediately available to them, they tend to lose patience. They either find the facts they want and produce the meanings they desire or they reject the text. Part of the reason for this is that boys tend to like books which are not reflective and where the language is simple. A text interests them if, as Sarland writes,

the subject matter is salient for them, the language is straight forward and the communication direct. It thus allows them not to have to believe every word, but to add it to the evidence available in an ongoing discussion about a matter of interest and concern to them (Sarland, 1991:70).

As Sarland finds, 'The thwarting of the prediction processes' (1991:97) can irritate readers as it did for many of the boys in this class. Some readers dislike books with 'a reflective style' (Sarland, 1991:97). A reflective style which uses symbolism can distance young readers from the text. The symbols might be unusual for the reader and unfamiliar. They might also 'function to prevent the reader from becoming involved in the action, that they distance the reader from the

drama and excitement of the story' (Sarland, 1991:98). Perhaps when the readers have constructed a text which does not live up to their expectations, 'they have attempted to construct an underlying story that is at odds with what they are offered' (Sarland, 1991:98). So, for many boys, texts which do not allow them to detect easily have to be rejected. Yet for many of the girls, more difficult language and more complicated narrative styles are not necessarily impediments. They tend to be more patient readers who like a text in which they can locate themselves. The use of the first person, of symbolism and of a variety of narrative styles can work to invite girl readers into the text, and they willingly take the opportunity to reflect upon the characters and the events with empathy.

The discourse of detection is a rational discourse, unambiguous, self-evident, seeking information and 'facts' and making 'rational' choices and opinions. It is part of the process of deduction, where there is seen to be an obvious answer with facts speaking for themselves. As Rogers Cherland finds, some boys, in response to fictional texts, participate in a discourse of action, 'a discourse concerned with logic and legality, a discourse that valued reason and credibility and that sought meaning in the plot and action. This discourse of action reflected an inclination to define characters by what they did rather than what they felt' (1994:134). In this discourse, speculations, inferences and abstractions are avoided, as are non-contextual judgments. The discourse of detection keeps meaning at the surface and encourages the development of a fixed position on the first reading. The facts are seen as existing outside a moral dimension and a social context. The discourse assumes that a text has a fixed meaning, it is objective and has no tolerance of ambiguity. For readers who prefer this discourse, closure is quickly achieved. In their reading of *Peter* (Walker, 1991), the boys find the facts about what it is to be properly masculine and quickly deduce inappropriate behaviours. The boys identify that to be a properly masculine is 'Not being a sissy', 'Not gay', 'Gay. Like they said, Dick is too big', and, 'Don't be a faggot'.

The discourse of detection assumes that a text has a fixed meaning and that first assumptions can be legitimately read as final. The discourse privileges the rational, assuming that if the facts are known, an opinion is justified, decisions can be made and actions can be taken. Once the boys assume that the character, Peter, (Walker, 1991) is homosexual, they form their opinions and in this case state that homosexuality is wrong and that they can do something about it, usually repressing it by violence. They make comments like, 'I do not think poofers are right. It's disgusting', 'You shoot them', 'My dad says they should all be shot' and 'I would beat him up and if it made no difference I would beat him up again'. They find and unmask difference and suppress it by use of power, verbal or physical. In this case the boys find the facts they want and read the facts as confirmed. They appear not care how the text positions the reader, they are not interested in going beyond the surface of the text or their opinions. They do not like the fact that the book is about homosexuality and reject it on that basis before they have read the book. One boy claims, 'I don't read books about poofers. I read books about sports'.

5.7.2 The Discourse of Confirmation

Category Four for the boys, 'believe they are powerful and can act upon the world and change it', and Category Six for the boys, 'make judgments' combined into a discourse which demonstrated how the students used the texts to find unambiguous confirmation of their world view, to make judgments upon it and to feel empowered to make changes. In taking up this discourse the students made judgments about the texts which were based on how far they endorsed the view of reality they expected. The students brought to the text a range of fixed, and perhaps absolute, generalisations about the world, about masculinity and femininity and about behaviour. These generalisations appeared to come from a notion of the absolute knower, one who is able to assume a position of power, a position of knowing. This hegemonic position was, in the main, uncontestable and uninterrogable and remained uncontestable and uninterrogable by the teacher. Whether it was a 'good' book or not depended on whether it reflected their world view. They also made judgments about the characters and their actions as well as issues about events and people raised by the text and highlighted by the teacher. The discourse of confirmation was based on sameness and could not tolerate difference. For many students this discourse included the assumption that they could act upon the world and change it. The students who were most comfortable with this discourse and who used it most frequently were the boys.

The discourse of confirmation is based on sameness and cannot tolerate difference. This discourse includes the use of the text by the students to find unambiguous confirmation of their world view. In taking up this discourse the students made judgments about the text which are based on how far it endorses the view of reality they expect. Whether it is a 'good' book or not depends on whether it reflects their world view. They also make judgments about the characters and their actions as well as issues about events and people raised by the text and highlighted by the teacher. For many students, mainly boys, this discourse includes the assumption that they can act upon the world and change it.

Many of the boys are embedded in a discourse which reveals their attitudes to power and their ability to act upon the world. Not only do they state firmly that they have the power to change the world but they also believe that violence is the chief way of solving problems. Once the text has been probed for the facts then the boys use the facts in the text as confirmation of their world view. They are much more comfortable in the discourse of confirmation than that of speculation or empathy which are much more typical of the girls. The girls use discourses which exclude the use of violence and the certainty that they can act upon the world and change it.

The issue which illustrates best how the students use the discourse of confirmation is that of power, the version of power in which violence and implied

violence is central. The issue includes the view that violence is the remedy, that boys act from an assumed position of male power and female powerlessness, passiveness, complicity. The discourse of confirmation seeks to confirm versions of hegemonic masculinity through encounters with texts or experiences in the world, and the version of femininity which supports this, emphasised femininity.

In this English classroom the girls made more responses to the narrative texts and, in fact, responded more than did the boys. Female silence and passivity in class can be partly attributed to various discriminatory patterns of teacher talk (Poynton, 1985). The girls, however, appear to be more passive in this context because they are quieter, more agreeable, less assertive, more helpful and more polite than are the boys. The quantity of their responses appears to be due to their complicity as good students who respond to the wishes of the teacher and who see themselves as good students of literature. These findings must be put into wider societal contexts (Gilbert & Taylor, 1991).

Although the girls respond more in the classroom in response to narrative texts, it does not position them as more powerful. What the boys say and how they say it accrues more power for them. Girls have demonstrated some gender-specific superiority in language skills yet this superiority has not brought 'changes in the power structure which controls the canon of literary acceptability in this country and it has not brought with it any corresponding access to academic jobs' (Gilbert, 1990:182). Girls, as speaking subjects, can rarely claim the power that the boys claim as their right.

Not only are the speaking discourses of the girls and the boys different, so too is their writing. In this class boys write to confirm hegemonic male positions. Girls write about feelings, about helping, sharing and empathising. Boys write about aggression, both physical and verbal, while girls write the romance. This is supported by other research which suggests that 'girls write about connection while boys write about achievement and separation' (Gilbert & Taylor, 1991:108). The hegemony and the violence demonstrated by the boys in talk and writing is rarely contested except by two girls, and then not effectually. The acceptance of violent writing on the part of the boys and aggressive talk directed at the teacher, the girls and at some boys 'indicates to them [the girls] that misogynistic, violent attacks like this are seen to be acceptable' (Gilbert & Taylor, 1991:113) and that boys have the right to take up speaking positions of authority, to tease and abuse the girls and other boys and to silence them (Gilbert & Taylor, 1991:113).

The discourse of confirmation which prioritises violence and violent solutions is one which is endorsed by classroom practices, the texts used in the study of literature, the talk encouraged and accepted by the teacher, the writing produced and rarely interrogated by anyone. Such unspoken affirmation maintains and supports the hegemony which already exists in the classroom and in society. 'The reality of much classroom life – a reality partially constructed by and continually

reinforced by many textual practices, including the production, selection and use of classroom reading materials – is that the failure to identify with a stereotypical, gendered subjectivity can lead to humiliation and mockery from the other students, and indirect (sometimes direct) pressure from teachers to conform’ (Gilbert & Taylor, 1991:113).

The discourse of confirmation includes the use of the text by the students to find unambiguous confirmation of their world view. In taking up this discourse the students make judgments about the text which are based on how far it endorses the view of reality they expect. The narrative text, *Peter* (Walker, 1991), is grounded in the homosexual/heterosexual duality. So although one of the readings of the story is the questioning of sexuality, it is also possible to interpret the story as a confirmation of the heterosexual/homosexual duality and use it for category-maintenance in the current sex/gender order. Even in adolescence these students appear to be positioned in a fragile way towards the moral/social order and the boys especially seem determined to confirm their versions of hegemonic masculinity. Response to text can be understood as ‘the children engaging in the maintenance of the moral order through which patterns of power and desire, that they have taken up as part of their ways of being, are maintained as meaningful’ (Davies, 1989:50).

The boys are able to read a text as they want to read it in order to find the version of reality that they want. Other research (Davies, 1989) has supported this argument. In a discussion of *The Paper Bag Princess* the boys managed to turn Ronald, into the central character, as opposed to recognising that the princess is positioned as central to the action (Davies, 1989:62). In the same way the boys in this study turn the title character in *Peter* (Walker, 1991) into a homosexual. For the boys, ‘the logic of gender relations and of the way one expects a story to be overrides any rational interpretation of the story’ (Davies, 1989:66). The boys were able to turn Josephine Alibrandi in *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992) into a beauty, ‘a chickie babe’, despite the evidence in the text. Even if the text positions the reader to shift the view of the romance, ‘the power of the pre-existing structure of the traditional narrative to prevent a new form of narrative from being heard is ever present, however, and there is no single solution to this’ (Davies, 1989:69). The boys read to confirm their versions of the world and they do so very successfully.

For these boys, operating in the discourse of confirmation, the social order is not experienced as an imposition but as ‘a set of self-evident meanings through which the world and one’s various positionings within it are maintained. Thus the division of the world into male and female does not need to be explained’ (Davies, 1989:50). Davies admits, however, that the self-evident structure is open to question when it runs in opposition to personal desire. With gender, for instance, a great deal of category-maintenance work needs to be done to keep it intact (Davies,

1989:51). The boys seem intent to maintain for themselves the category of heterosexual male without interrogation.

Although the discourse of confirmation for boys almost inevitably leads to aggression, domination and violence, actual or threatened, the boys are not concerned with the problems of aggressive masculinity. It is much more important for them to confirm an aggressive position than to reflect on it and to see its implications. The problems with aggressive masculinity manifest themselves daily in the classroom. Operating in the discourse of confirmation the boys disrupt the activities in the classroom, they are hostile to the girls and the teacher and they take a lot of the teacher's time. 'At one end is the aggressive masculine bonding in evidence when groups of boys disrupt classrooms, derogate girls and invade their play, and make fun of subordinated 'weaker' boys. Boys who engage in this sort of behaviour take centre stage in many school ethnographies' (Thorne, 1993:168). Their aggressive behaviour turns quickly into harassment, either physical or in the form of verbal put downs. The dominant male group sets the overall tone of the class. It silences the girls and the boys who do not position themselves hegemonically and challenges the spontaneity of the others, limiting their participation. Many classroom practices support the masculine behaviour of aggressive boys, ignoring its links with male privilege and sexism, dominance and control. Unless deconstructed and subverted, the discourse of confirmation in the boys leads to male dominance and female subordination. 'Without guidance and positive intervention boys adopt definitions that set masculinity in opposition to femininity and reproduce male dominance' (Thorne, 1993:169). Male dominance was reproduced in this class through the textual practices which were encouraged and supported.

Most of the girls in the class are uncomfortable using the discourse of confirmation, especially when power and power constituted by violence, is central to that discourse.

Despite the access that women have gained to the male symbolic order, the majority of women feel quite ambivalent about power, and it is something they often claim they do not want. Power remains fundamentally contradictory to the idea and the idealisation of the idea of being female (Davies, 1989:71).

The girls in this study prefer to use discourses which demonstrate empathy and sensitivity to the rights of others. Like the girls in Davies' study, these girls

operate within an ethic of care for others, not within a morality of rights as men do. To want power is experienced as somehow immoral, is to behave like men, and then is to threaten the social/moral order which is organised around the difference (Davies, 1989:72).

The girls accede to the discourse of domesticity in which women are positioned as less than men but are often accorded apparent legitimate power (Davies, 1989:73).

Rather than achieving a position of power, which boys attain through the discourse of confirmation, girls, through the romance, are prepared for the fate which awaits them, that of achieving a man. The girls accept, sometimes uneasily, a sexual inequality, a sexual passivity, a position where they are the object of male desire. Davies claims that 'the way female sexuality is generally constituted makes it a critical element of the process whereby girls position themselves as the object of another's gaze' (1989:77).

In the classroom, the girls recognise that the boys disregard their sexuality, do not see that it is important, do not care about it, especially in the way that the boys confirm their own sexual agency: 'I'm good at it already.' The girls admit and do not like the position afforded them by the boys. They dislike the lack of space allowed them and yet they do not see that they can change this.

The lack of legitimate agency that girls experience in relation to sexuality is directly related to the constitution of sexuality as an area of male domination and control. Open sexual behaviour in boys, in contrast, is not connected with lack of virtue. It tends to be seen rather, as a 'natural' and positive expression of sexuality, even when it is used aggressively in an attempt to control others (Davies, 1989:77).

The way that the boys speak about male sexuality is aggressive and active. The sexuality of the girls is either ignored or treated by the boys as non-existent. Such a position strongly confirms male hegemony for both boys and the girls.

The discourse of confirmation is preferred by the dominant group of boys in the class. These are boys who have successfully achieved hegemonic masculinity. Although the girls actually respond more to the texts, the voice of these boys is the loudest and the most dominating. These boys are aggressive, both physically and verbally. Their aggression and their lack of interest in anyone but themselves make them interesting as a group. They are impatient with the stories (Davies, 1989:123). Their comments are brief, they are aggressive with each other. They express negativity towards the females (Davies, 1989:123). If successful masculinity is achieved, these boys exhibit 'a sense of power, competence, hardness-their bodies are filled with a good feeling of strength and well being and they have the capacity to deal with all-comers' (Davies, 1989:126). None of the girls positioned themselves in this way. The discourse of confirmation is not appealing to the girls.

Not all the boys position themselves as hegemonically male. Those who do not, 'experience an inevitable tension in relation to their masculinity' (Davies,

1989:124). In the classroom, those boys who try to position themselves differently are silenced by the other boys by derision, by name calling or by other forms of marginalisation. Some of these boys try to demonstrate enough of the qualities of hegemonic masculinity so as to be acceptable to the other boys (Davies, 1989:125). Any of the boys, who might have access to alternative discourses, and are sensitive and feeling, rarely demonstrate these discourses in classroom talk.

Some girls are able to assert themselves quite powerfully with the boys. 'They have access to a discourse in which freedom and individuality are central and so have experienced themselves as having control over their lives' (Davies, 1989:119). Despite this they are often accepting of the narrative structures 'which presume the power of the central male hero' (Davies, 1989:119). In this way male hegemony is confirmed.

Female power is often seen to be related to female sexuality; however, there is no apparent use of female sexuality in the classroom in physical contact or flirting. Three girls regularly sit with two of the boys, the boys hegemonically masculine enough not to be teased by the other boys, the girls assuming a position of friendliness, even motherliness toward the boys. 'The discursive practices through which female sexuality is constituted are riddled with contradictions' (Davies, 1989:120). In one discussion Meredith suggests to James that one day he might like to get married, while he aggressively refuses to accept the suggestion. She takes up a position as supportive towards the boys in the group. She and the other girls at the table help the boys and accept shoves and pushes from them as a part of their acceptance by the boys. Perhaps the boys see the girls 'as good friends and as people who had the same interests as they did' (Davies, 1989:122). These positions support male power and the acceptance of the boys' behaviour. The girls much more willingly take up a position of sensitivity and engagement. In the act of reflection the girls affirm the hegemonic position of the boys.

5.7.3 The Discourse of Resistance

This discourse was a combination of a refusal to accept the facts or the world view offered by the text, a willingness to divert from the text and a refusal to engage or interact with it. Category One for the boys, 'refuse to engage with text', and Category Three for the boys, 'divert from text to discuss issues raised themselves', both demonstrated a resistance to a discussion of the text. This was a discourse that the boys demonstrated they were comfortable with, although the girls demonstrated their resistance in different ways. The discourse for the boys was one of rejection of authority, either of the text or of the teacher, through defiance and hostility. Perhaps for the girls their resistance was through silence. The overt discourse of resistance was used almost exclusively by the boys, while the silent resistance of the girls was more difficult to ascertain. What could be seen as passivity by the girls could be an effective form of resistance. What some of the

girls resisted strongly was the boys' oppression of them and what they called the 'homophobia' of the boys.'

This discourse is a combination of a refusal to accept the facts or the world view offered by the text, a willingness to divert from the text and a refusal to engage or interact with it. The discourse is one of rejection of authority, either of the text or of the teacher, through defiance and hostility. In the main it is the boys who resist openly and defiantly. This open resistance silences those boys who do not wish to be positioned other than hegemonically. For the girls, a position of silence is their most powerful form of resistance.

The issue which best illustrates the discourse of resistance in the class is that of sexuality, especially homosexuality, which has already been discussed in the discourse of detection, but also female sexuality and gender. Boys resist a text which challenges male hegemony, in fact they actively resist anything that disrupts hegemony, anything that challenges hegemonic subject positions. For many of the boys the position of women challenges male hegemony and is to be resisted. The boys do not want to engage in talk about homosexuality nor, indeed, do they willingly engage in talk about female sexuality and lesbianism. They resist texts which might challenge or subvert male hegemony. They set themselves up in opposition except to that which confers or confirms hegemony. Some of the girls are able to contest the hegemony of the boys but the challenges are rare and usually disregarded by the boys and the teacher.

A text like *Peter* (Walker, 1991) can open up a space in the English classroom within which dominant versions of masculinity can be analysed, critiqued and deconstructed. Through these processes students can be given access to alternative discourses and subject positions from which they can represent themselves. Hegemonic discourses can be ruptured and binary oppositional structures fractured. However, the boys in this class show deep resistance to any challenge of the masculinist discourses of which they are a part (Martino, 1994a, 1994b).

The boys refuse to accept the readings of the girls, just as they refuse to accept oppositional readings, while the majority of the girls are prepared to accept multiple readings, arguing in terms of personal opinion. These readings are supported by the work of Mellor and Patterson (1991) who suggest that challenging powerful readings can be extremely difficult.

Most boys are reluctant to read texts they consider to be 'girls' texts and as a result, in the English classroom, the girls are expected often to read books written for boys (Patterson & Lee, 1993). Because texts are often studied as true to life explorations inviting personal response and personal connections, the boys are easily able to reject those texts which do not link with their view of the world and their life experiences (Gilbert, 1994:62). The boys make comments like, 'It's

boring!' and 'Nothing happens'. The boys resist *Peter* (Walker, 1991) because they see the exploration of homosexuality as potentially threatening and they reject *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992) because they consider it to be a book for girls, one in which there is no action and nothing happens.

The dominant pedagogical discourses such as Cultural Heritage and Personal Growth are complicit in sustaining male hegemonic positions, which include resistance to anything that threatens male hegemony. Implicitly or explicitly they may support the notion that if boys are encouraged to take up characteristics usually associated with femininity then their heterosexuality might be jeopardised. It is true that in this classroom the boys resist any threat to their heterosexual status. Yet in many classrooms, and in this classroom, the girls are encouraged to behave like boys, to take up discourses of confirmation and resistance, without any risk to their sexuality. Except for a couple of the girls, the boys' homophobic statements are largely unquestioned.

Unquestioned homophobic responses will be jeopardised if what we understand as the masculine is to be freed to accommodate the feminine. Such modifications to masculinity are understood not as 'humanising' but as 'feminising' in a derogatory sense (Alloway, 1995:102).

For most of the boys anything that is marked as different from what it is to be powerful male jeopardises their masculinity and their sexuality. 'Without guidance and positive intervention, boys adopt definitions of masculinity in opposition to femininity and reproduce male dominance' (Thorne, 1993:169).

The boys resist a position which might be thought of as more suitable for girls or might be sexually suspect. They express horror at the thought that they might be thought to be acting like a girl. One of the worst insults, and one which is used in the class, is to be called a girl. Both girls and boys accept that the nature of friendship is gendered just as sexuality is. They acknowledge that boys have to get around in groups or gangs whereas girls can have a best friend. When the teacher asks why, the boys say that it is a bit 'sus' if two boys get around together all the time.

5.7.4 The Discourse of Reflection

This discourse was closely connected with response to the texts. It included Category Five for the girls, 'enrol in narrative', Category Eight for the girls, 'talk about the characters in the text as if they are real', and Category Ten for the girls, 'see characters and text as constructions'. This discourse recognised the students' willingness to reflect on the world view offered by the text and to enrol in the text by locating themselves within it. This discourse enabled the students to make judgments which were mediated contextually by the process of reflection. They

were able to make judgments, but in a reflective rather than a condemnatory way. This discourse also enabled them to talk about the characters as if they were reflections of the real world and yet at the same time recognising that the characters were discursive constructions. The discourse of reflection was one which the girls were much more willing to use.

This discourse recognises the students' willingness to reflect on the world view offered by the text and to enrol in the text by locating themselves within it. This is a discourse which the girls prefer, gaining enormous enjoyment from becoming part of the text, especially the romance text, and living the text as they read. The girls say, 'I love this book', 'I can't stop reading this book', and, 'God, that's a good book'. Those who enjoy the romance are engrossed in the narrative. Because the narratives that most of the girls enjoy are romance texts, these are the ones through which they can best practice the discourse of reflection, which is to immerse oneself in the book, observing the characters, trying to understand their feelings and emotions, to predict their behaviour and to wonder about whether or not they agree with or like the actions of the characters. As they reflect on the characters and their actions it is then possible for them to link their reflections with the way they observe behaviour in real life. The boys tend not to do this with either the romance text or their preferred genres.

Sarland's study supports these observations. He claims that the girl reader takes on,

the spectator role, observing her fellow characters, trying to understand and predict their behaviour, and judging their actions. In the same way these girls in real life observe their peers, seeking to understand and predict their behaviour and judge their actions. But at the same time, of course, they are taking the spectator role with respect to the fiction and are thus enabled to reflect on their own thinking processes in relation to their own society. And it needs to be reiterated here that these are girls doing this kind of reflection. Nowhere on the tapes do boys produce these sorts of discussion about behaviour, either between the sexes or within single-sex peer groups. It is, of course, what tends to get dismissed by paternalistic culture as gossip (Sarland, 1991:85).

Most of the girls read the book, especially the romance, as if it is real and make links with the world. In commenting on *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992) they make comments like, 'It's interesting', 'It's about life' and, 'It's interesting. It's the story. She does not have a dad. She meets him unexpectedly. Her Mum is a single mum. She falls in love'. They gain great pleasure from the text. They show delight in following the activities of the main female character, who is usually smart, articulate, resourceful and nice. They express admiration for the ambition of the character, Josephine, who intends to be a lawyer, to be independent and to achieve what she wants in life. She is smart and capable and able to articulate her thoughts and appears to be able to stick up for herself (Marchetta, 1992).

Many of girl readers also gain pleasure from identifying with the main character, who seems to have so much, especially if she is the object of the attention of an attractive male character. A significant comment from one of the girls, which is uttered with passion, is 'I liked it. It's real. It's true. It's what we will be going through in a couple of years at HSC and all that'. If the book is read as if it were real then links can be made 'between the book and the world' (Sarland, 1991:88). The girls relate to the romance story by recognising that the characters are behaving like they would behave, 'the characters make the same decisions and judgments and discriminations about their behaviour, and that of their friends, as these girls make in real life' (Sarland, 1991:84). A novel like *Looking for Alibrandi*, (Marchetta, 1992) offers the girls the opportunity to satisfy their longing for romance, a longing which could be gratified through feeling a sense of importance and a feeling of being cherished (Christian-Smith, 1991:115). This novel is particularly attractive to many girls because it affirms their desires to be competent and successful while understanding how difficult this can be for most and that an interruption to ambition is understandable. By the end of the novel the character, Josephine, is wondering whether or not she will ever be a lawyer and acknowledges that she does not care. The thought of Jacob and the redeeming force of love is utmost in *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992:260).

Sarland supports the view that for girls, 'Many of the meanings that they bring to and take from texts stem from their position in the world as young women, in particular their concern with home and with inner life and their perceived vulnerability in the outside world' (Sarland, 1991:49). This positions the girls within the romance story, suggesting why it is both so familiar and so appealing to them. As Gilbert and Taylor write, 'Romance fiction is therefore "readable", because its generic conventions are recognisable and familiar' (1991:93). They suggest that part of the appeal of romance texts is that they are closed and do not 'offer space for textual play' (Gilbert & Taylor, 1991:93) or idiosyncratic meaning. There may be a small range of possible twistings and turnings in the plot in order for suspense to operate but the possibility of a range of multiple, divergent and resistant responses is not one which is desirable for the girls. The predicability is comfortable and appealing.

The romance story offers confirmation of masculine hegemony in the world of action and adventure, while for the girls it offers the ideal opportunity for reflection in a world which is private, interior, based on consideration of others and eventually their own subordination to the power of men. The narrator is always female, describing what she, the female protagonist, is thinking and feeling. Because love and femininity are central to the romance, despite the privileged position given to male hegemony, boys resist the text. If the boys are persuaded to read the romance, they read reluctantly and they read differently. They read for the information and for confirmation of their position in the world. They read to resist positions which might subvert the power they assume is theirs, even if the power is only theoretical. The boys colonise the romance text as well as other narrative

genres, while the girls succumb to its delights and enjoy the pleasures of reflecting on the desired possibilities. According to Sarland, the boys in his study,

project themselves into the generalised categories and relationships offered by the texts as empty spaces, almost, to be occupied by readers while for girls the detail of the text reaches into the lives of the readers in such a way that they find the text reflected in their own lives. Hence the distinction between the boys finding themselves in the text and the girls finding the text in themselves (Sarland, 1991:85).

This discourse enables the students to make judgments which are mediated contextually by the process of reflection. They are able to make judgments but in a reflective rather than a condemnatory way. Because the girls reflect in the context of the romance the process of reflection locates them even more firmly in a discourse of subordination rather than one of empowerment. Generally the girls love the romance, judging its truth in relation to other similar texts and their relation to the world. The judgments they make affirm the importance of the romance, the desirability of the gendered characters and the pleasurable inevitability of the outcomes.

This discourse also enables the students to think and talk about the characters as if they are reflections of the real world and yet at the same time recognising that the characters are discursive constructions. They can identify the characteristics which make the ideal heroine and hero. The heroine needs to be pretty, if not at the beginning, at least to emerge so during the course of the novel, she needs to be smart, clever, resourceful and perhaps funny. The hero needs to be strong, not necessarily physically so, but in terms of his independence, initiative, courage and intelligence (Christian-Smith, 1993:108). These girls are involved with the text emotionally, yet simultaneously distant from it. There are contradictions and tensions in reading the story and linking it with life that the girls are aware of. While they are able to demonstrate that they are not passive consumers of the text, they nevertheless usually capitulate to the dominant ideology of the text. They are well aware that the stories are not like real life and yet are able to identify with the characters and their anxieties (Willinsky & Hunniford, 1986). The girls are able to make comments like, 'Life is not happily ever after', and 'Everything does not end happily'; yet at the same time they claim to be satisfied with an appropriately happy ending. Even if the ending is not resolved happily in the text, many of the girls can project a happy resolution in marriage at some later date.

While the girls in this study are able to recognise that the photograph of a pretty young woman on the front cover of the book could not be the fictional character, the boys want to read it as such. One of the boys claims that on the cover is 'A chickie babe. It's the girl on the front cover'. Most of the boys agreed, a response which seems surprising but which fits with the reading that the boys desire to read the text for the information they want, that they find in it what they want, that

they prefer to read all texts as non-fiction. 'I will feel really deceived if it is not the girl on the front cover', one boy says with extreme disappointment. While most of the girls find the comment difficult to believe, their responses reveal that they think of the characters as real, 'She is dark, brown eyes, olive skin, brown curly hair, she wears glasses', and link the description in their understanding of the world with the comment, 'You do not have green eyes if you are Italian'.

As the girls reflect on the romance, share their reflections and read other affirmations of the romance story they 'are increasingly aligned to the spheres of romance and heterosexuality for their logic, causality and sequence' (Gilbert, 1994:58). When girls engage in the discourse of reflection, they reveal how deeply they are embedded in the progress of the romance. This discourse informs the other discourses which girls prefer and practice in the classroom. In their writing, almost all of the girls in the class thought that they would be happily married by the age of twenty-five. Some of them imagined that they would be able to manage career and family and they all predicted and hoped for a happy life which is connected with love, material possessions and the acquisition of the prince (Hiller & Langridge, 1993).

For both girls and boys the danger of discursive practices which are affirmed by the other discourses operating in the school, and by the teacher, is that the practices and the discourses which support them become increasingly invisible and naturalised. Gender must be seen to be

achieving the practices, the ways of knowing and being that make sense within the narrative/interactive structures of the society it lives in. That achievement in turn is treated to a large extent as a natural expression of maleness and femaleness, such interpretations being aided by the association in our culture of the body with that which is natural (Davies, 1989:20).

The narrative structures operating in society and in the classroom reflect the natural order, none more so than in the romance story which demonstrates a disturbing faith in the transforming powers of romantic love and a romantic investment in self-knowledge, sexual passivity and dependence.

The romance genre, is both representation and realisation of a naturalised discourse deeply embedded in the subjectivities of the students. As a genre, 'the romance follows a very predictable pattern' (Gilbert & Taylor, 1991:86). The story begins with the romantic/feminine novice and it turns on her transformation. The typical novice does not think that she needs a boyfriend or she does not attract a boyfriend. She thinks that she is different from other girls. By the end of the story she is transformed and so, too, is the hero, who capitulates to the lure of attraction

offered by the heroine but is captivated by her submission and beauty. He does not have to relinquish his position in the world, but her world is transformed.

Romance ideology emphasises inscriptions of the body which conform to the current cultural ideals. In this case, for the girls it is slimness, long blonde hair, physical beauty, goodness and sexual attraction, all enhanced by clothing which modestly conceals yet subtly reveals the contours of the attractive body and its potential sexiness. For the boys, the physique, which is strong and muscular, the skin tanned, the jaw line square and firm, intelligence oozing from the eyes, all shown to advantage by the careless bagginess of the highly fashionable clothes. He oozes a brash and obvious sexuality which contrasts with the passive modesty of hers. For her, the ideals are love, capitulation, dependence, emotional responsibility of the relationship, wealth, the ability to consume material possessions, domesticity and beauty. For him, the ideals are strength, independence, intelligence, ambition, wealth and sexual availability. The success of the ideology lies in the transformation of the male who suddenly, miraculously realises the worth of the female. Her capitulation to the desirable position offered by his love inevitably leads to her oppression.

The romance narrative text read by the students, *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992), has many of the seductive elements of the romance, while at the same time attempting to address contemporary issues such as adolescent sexuality, ethnicity, illegitimacy, youth suicide, religion and class. The heroine is intelligent and ambitious. She does not feel that she is accepted by the rich girls at the private school she attends as a scholarship student. 'I felt disadvantaged from the beginning' (Marchetta, 1992:7). This is Josephine Alibrandi, who is different because she is a scholarship girl, an Italian, illegitimate, not beautiful and intelligent. The novice is transformed. Josephine dreams of 'being successful and of falling in love with somebody with money. Of someone loving me. Of having two children, one boy and one girl' (Marchetta, 1992:71). In this case Josephine's transformation is not quite typical. 'My emancipation did not happen as I expected it to' (Marchetta, 1992:258). Although she is re-united with her father, she loses the one great love of her life. Eventually she realises her 'place in life' (Marchetta, 1992:258). She wavers in her desire to become a barrister and she still feels in her heart, however, that 'one day I'll be with Jacob Coote again' (Marchetta, 1992:260). There is a lot of time spent in conversation with friends, there is conflict with teachers, friends, her boyfriend. The girls in the study read this fiction as a romance. They are convinced that Josephine will either marry Jacob, her true love, or someone even more attractive and acceptable. Most of them do not see the potential in the novel for a disruption of the romance story-line, the novel becomes the romance story-line despite the inconclusiveness of the ending.

The girls reading the romance see the tensions in pursuing independence and achieving the ultimate in the romance. For many of the young women the struggle appears to be too difficult and there is a recognition that the easier solution is to

capitulate to subordination, which is reconstructed as achievement and individual choice. The reconstruction is not easily achieved, nor is the capitulation; however, the choice between what appears to be potentially a supportive and satisfactory relationship with a man and that of struggling alone with a career in a male dominated profession becomes easily obvious. The career can be postponed for love, for family, for relationship with the aim that all this can be retrieved at some postponed time. 'Becoming feminine – becoming romantic – means recognising that there will be inevitable tension in pursuing independence, and that it might be best to find a "good guy" who'll give you the best options within this framework, so that lost opportunities and forsaken goals are less keenly felt' (Gilbert & Taylor, 1991:92).

In the study, the girls are not prepared to accept that 'Romance ideology is not a discourse intended for "her"'. They do not accept that it is potentially a discourse which locks women into passive and submissive responses rather than active and independent action; a discourse which cannot construct a future for women without men; a discourse which necessitates the humiliating and crippling romantic inscription of the body' (Gilbert & Taylor, 1991:103). Most of the girls see romance ideology as an individual choice and one which is liberatory rather than potentially oppressive. Many of them do not accept that it operates to oppress.

The enrolment in the romance story masks the ways in which the romance text positions girls to accept that beauty, humility, passivity and kindness are desirable, 'feminine', 'romantic' aspects of being a woman who will find love and be loved. Nor is it obvious to the girls that the romance fiction also inserts girls into discursive networks within which such constructions become plausible, 'natural', 'commonsensical' (Gilbert, 1994:58). The girls are enrolled in a seductive story which appears to them to be a reflection of life and which offers the opportunity to reflect on the story and on life itself, albeit in restricted ways.

5.7.5 The Discourse of Empathy

This discourse which revealed the capacity to look at the world, or the world of the text, through another's eyes, the eyes of the text, the characters in the text, the teacher and the other students, was evident in five of the categories used mostly by the girls. They were Category 1, 'do not see that they can act upon the world'; Category 2, 'empathetic/understanding reading of the world'; Category 3, 'endorse the discourse of individual difference'; Category 9 'interact with text'; and Category 11 'divert from text to discuss issues raised by teacher'. While these categories appear on the surface to be different, there were links between them. This discourse recognised the importance of feelings both of the characters in the text and the students' feelings when engaged and interacting with the text. It was a discourse of sympathy and understanding. It endorsed individual difference, positioned the students to be willing to understand the teacher's point of view and to discuss what the teacher suggested. It was a discourse which accepted

complexity and multiple possibilities to the extent that it was impossible and unnecessary to adjudicate among diversity or to adopt a position of power towards the world and try to change it. The discourse included the virtue of compliance, deferral and the acceptance of authority. This positioned the students to respond to the text to the extent that the teacher expected and to discuss issues raised by the teacher. The girls were more willing to use this discourse than were the boys.

This discourse of empathy is closely related to the discourse of reflection and romance ideology. Central to the discourse is the recognition of the importance of feelings both of the characters in the text and the students' feelings when engaged and interacting with the text. It is a discourse of sympathy and understanding. It endorses individual difference, is willing to understand the teacher's point of view and to discuss what the teacher suggests. It is a discourse which construes complexity and multiple possibilities to the extent that it is impossible and unnecessary to adjudicate among diversity or to adopt a position of power towards the world and try to change it. The discourse is one of compliance, deferral and the acceptance of authority. This positions the students to respond to the text to the extent that the teacher expects and to discuss issues raised by the teacher.

The issue of family illustrates well how the girls demonstrate an empathetic response. In the discussion of family there is the opportunity to examine the nature of mothering and fathering and to explore how families can replicate models of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity.

Both in talk and writing, the girls overwhelmingly prefer to operate in the discourse of empathy, especially when the teacher invites this response and when the text is viewed as representative of real life. It is unusual for the boys to use the discourse. As Rogers Cherland's work shows, 'Both the boys and the girls used the discourse of feeling and the discourse of action. But the girls were more inclined to use the discourse of feeling, while the boys were more inclined to use the discourse of action' (1994:144). The girls are embedded in a range of empathetic discourses, which inform their attitudes towards relationships, supporting the 'have and to hold' discourse (Hollway, 1984). They believe in tolerance, acceptance, awareness of multiplicity, the right of individual choice, sympathy and understanding.

The girls tend to respond through a discourse of human connections or a discourse of feeling which is 'a way of talking about literature, a way of signifying, through language, a concern with the feelings both of the reader of the text and of the characters portrayed in the text in question' (Rogers Cherland, 1994:136). The girls use the discourse of feeling to name emotional states of the characters or 'to analyse certain characters and describe what they might be feeling' (Rogers Cherland, 1994:137). They feel sorry for a character who is in a predicament, as is the title character in *Peter* (Walker, 1991).

The discourse of empathy allows the girls to discuss relationships as if they are discussing relationships in real life. They enjoy such discussion, even to the point of making comments like, 'it's true, it's real, it's what will be happening to us in a couple of years at HSC'. As with the work of Rogers Cherland 'The discourse of feeling often dealt with human relationships, which were always of great interest to the girls involved' (1994:138).

The girls show similar empathy to both the characters in the text and their classmates. They show consideration and understanding, accepting the points of view of others with tolerance. They show respect for relationships both in the classroom and in the texts. They recognise the importance of human connections, respecting their importance often to the detriment of their own views. The girls tend to respond in classroom discussion through a discourse of human connections, a discourse of feeling or a discourse of empathy, which is 'a way of talking about literature, a way of signifying, through language, a concern with the feelings both of the reader of the text and of the characters portrayed in the text in question' (Rogers Cherland, 1994:136). The girls used the discourse of feeling to name emotional states of the characters or 'to analyse certain characters and describe what they might be feeling' (Rogers Cherland, 1994:137).

It is not that the girls cannot recognise that the characters are constructions; they are able to see how the characters might be formed by the language of the text. They can see that some events might be exaggerated but they much prefer to use a discourse of empathy in discussion, a discourse which has to accept that the characters might be real. In a study by Gilbert and Taylor (1991:62), 'The girls described the events and characters ... as "exaggerated" but were still able to relate to them and identify with the character's feelings and actions'.

The discussion from the transcript of the present research reveals the students' views of mothers and fathers. It illustrates how the girls are embedded within discourses which value qualities of caring, understanding and sympathy. It is interesting and significant that both the boys and the girls would like fathers to have the same qualities that they identify important in mothers. The girls make comments like, a good mother is 'one who does not yell at you', 'One who is understanding who you can talk to', 'A person who loves and cares for you no matter what you say and do', while a good father is 'The same as the mother, one who understands'.

5.7.6 The Discourse of Speculation

There were four categories for the girls which indicated their willingness to use a discourse of speculation. They were Category 4, 'willing to note theoretical/ideological implications of text/life'; Category 6, 'tentative'; Category 7, 'speculate'.

and elaborate'; and Category 12, 'make comparisons with narrative texts/film,/TV'. This discourse indicated the readiness of the girls in particular to elaborate, to think about possibilities and speculate, to note the theoretical and ideological implications of the text and life, to be provisional and tentative and to make speculative comparisons with other genres, including TV and narrative texts. While the boys indicated that they had access to these discourses, they were not as willing as the girls to use them in classroom discussion of texts and issues arising from the texts.

The discourse of speculation reveals the readiness of the students to elaborate, to think about possibilities and speculate, to note the theoretical and ideological implications of the text and life, to be provisional and tentative and to make speculative comparisons with other genres, including TV and literature.

The issues of otherness best illustrate the discourse of speculation. Using this discourse the girls, in particular, are able to discuss issues of difference, which include those of Aboriginality, ethnicity, illegitimacy, class, race, religion and homosexuality. The discourse of speculation allows them to accept multiplicity, to acknowledge that nothing is absolute, and that everything can be disrupted.

The discourse of speculation allows the students to find multiple possibilities in texts. As Sarland suggests, girls 'find things in the book which enable them to read it differently from boys. They exploit, in other words, the plurality of the text' (1991:51). Girls are able to read against the ideological closure of certain texts. 'There are texts, and readings, where the girls do not so much read different parts of the texts from the boys, as read the same parts with quite contrary effects' (Sarland, 1991:51). Most of the girls in the class read each of the three texts very differently from the boys. They do not read *Peter* (Walker, 1991) as a book about homosexuality, they read it as an exploration of possible sexuality. They see action in *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992) that the boys refuse to admit and they are sympathetic to the issues of Aboriginality in *Dougy* (Moloney, 1993) in ways that the boys refuse to be.

The girls are able to speculate within the discourse of the romance and yet are limited by it. The predisposition of the girls to accept the discourse of the romance is part of the value that the girls place on individuality which is endorsed in the discourse of speculation. They do not see that their embeddedness in the romance is part of a larger social context, rather they see it as individual choice. When they see others acting differently, they see it in terms of individual choice rather than opening up alternative positions which they might be able to take up. It is a version of femininity which accepts difference yet endorses the inevitability of the happily ever after ending of the romance. The speculation takes place within the more dominant discourse of romance.

Through the discourse of speculation, the girls demonstrate an intellectual awareness that many families break up and many others live in poverty, yet they appear certain that things will be different for them. There is a contradiction between their intellectual awareness of the trends of society and their hopes and dreams for themselves (Hiller & Langridge, 1993; Gilbert & Taylor, 1991:18). The discourse of speculation is the most potentially optimistic discourse of the six. On the surface it reveals mobility, flexibility and a belief in transformative capacity of change. However, for the girls, the discourse of speculation is shaped by romance ideology and the expectation of the romantic resolution. Perhaps the girls see that transformation is possible but that transformation is bound by the romance which teaches how to be appropriately feminine. Ultimately for the girls, the discourse of speculation may not be about proliferation of meaning but about the constraint which is imposed by the other discourses. The discourse of speculation may not have the material effect of the male discourses. While it might look enabling, it can be curiously limiting if only because, as female, the girls are acting from positions of powerlessness. The discourse of speculation potentially positions the girls who prefer to use it as vulnerable and fragile because the deferral of action, the deferral of closure and the deferral of certainty can look like a surrender of control.

5.8 Competing Discourses

Within the classroom there were a number of competing and contradictory discourses operating. If subjectivity is seen to be discursively produced and formed out of specific sets of social relations and social practices (Henriques et al., 1984), then the discourses which are produced and maintained in this English classroom are crucial. These discourses reflected the cultural construction of gendered subjectivities and the discursive ways in which these subjectivities were reproduced. The construction of the six discourses were not intended to maintain any binaries which might have existed, rather they were intended to question and disrupt them, rendering them visible for interrogation. The six discourses were an attempt to unsettle and reconstruct the discourses of the subjects in the English classroom.

5.9 Conclusion

In the light of the preceding analysis, the discursive reconstructions of a number of texts and the interrogation of the data, two dominant, complex and shifting discursive positions are constructed, one in which the boys prefer to be located and one in which the girls prefer to be located. The research acknowledges that girls and boys are not homogenous groups but what is clear from the analysis of the discourses is that there are gendered differences in language and response to text which are significant. In this study three of the identified discourses are predominantly used by the girls while the other three are used by the boys. Each of

the three discourses can be reconfigured into two discursive positions, one for the boys and one for the girls. While all students demonstrate that they can use the range of discourses available in the classroom they take up the discourses which most appropriately inscribe them as male or female. They

learn the forms of desire and power and powerlessness that are embedded in and made possible by the various discursive practices through which they position themselves and are positioned (Davies, 1989:4).

The students in this study have spent considerable time acquiring the discourses available to them in English classrooms and they reveal a gendered preference for ways of reading, ways of engaging with and responding to the narrative texts they read and shared.

The researcher argues that the following dominant discursive positions, apprehension and insertion, or inside/outside are those which are taken up by girls and boys in their engagement with narrative texts in one classroom. The three discourses used by the boys and the girls reveal their mutuality and interconnections. Detection, confirmation and resistance show ways of looking at the world which have processes in common. They are exterior, surface, powerful, combining the already known with the new, affirming what is known and resisting that which is not easily recognisable. This discursive position is labelled apprehension. Reflection, empathy and speculation are likewise closely interconnected. They are interior, reflective, tentative, passive and emphasise the importance of feeling. The discursive position is labelled insertion. These two sets of discourses reproduce the public/private, inside/outside binaries. The repeated practice of the discourses, which the students prefer, both naturalise the discourses for the teachers and the students and further embed them in those discourses.

A Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement, one which makes visible to both teachers and students how power operates to privilege certain kinds of texts, both those produced and those consumed, is empowering. One of the aims of such a pedagogy is to examine the binaries that currently exist in the teaching of English and attempt to reconcile them. To break the power of the binaries is to locate the excluded middle between the polar opposites to allow proliferation of discursive possibilities and subject positions and to open spaces for liberatory possibilities. This pedagogy is elaborated in the final chapter.

Chapter 6

Mapping the Pedagogical Discourses

Introduction: Extending the territory

6.1 The Teachers

6.1.1 Examining Teacher Transcripts

- Teacher I'll read you a bit from 'Gracey'. How is the book organised? Three first person narratives – Gracey, Dougy and the policeman. 'Dougy' is a limited third person because it only shows you what Dougy knows. In 'Gracey' you get different points of view, you get different perspectives. Does Dougy always tell us the truth in 'Gracey'?
- Boy No.
- Teacher In 'Dougy'?
- Boy Yes.
- Teacher You have to be careful when ready to tell whether the narrator is telling the truth. Why does Moloney use different methods?

This extract from the transcripts shows an unusual pedagogical intervention by the teacher. He uses literary theory to discuss point of view and narrator reliability in a way which had not been attempted before in the class. It could be an attempt to demonstrate a difference between authorial intention and the reliability of the constructed narrator, a way of introducing the students to the constructedness of the text, a suggestion of how the reader needs to fill the gaps the author leaves. It is also an attempt to get the students involved in the reading.

As part of the examination of the relationship between gendered subjectivity, pedagogy and the reading of narrative texts in a classroom, this chapter examines how pedagogical discourses reproduce gendered subjectivities through engagement with narrative texts. In this chapter the pedagogical discourses of the teachers are explored using a similar coding process as the one used for the students (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This process is a further extension of the grounded theory approach which sees that it is through a reciprocal relationship between theory and data that empirically grounded theory is developed. This thesis suggests that there are three dominant pedagogical discourses used in the teaching of English, Cultural Heritage, Personal Response and Critical Literacy. The features of each of the discourses are

identified as part of the grounded theory approach and applied to the transcripts. The process locates the teachers in the range of pedagogical discourses identified. The implications for the production of gendered subjectivities through pedagogical discourses are explored in an attempt to encourage teachers to be critically self-reflective and to gain a deeper understanding of their particular sites (Lather, 1991a:56).

6.1.2 Teacher Discourses

The interrogation of the transcripts and the students' writing demonstrated the influence of the teachers' pedagogical discourses in contributing to the discourses of the classroom. The teachers' purposes, their theoretical positions and their pedagogical practices appeared to have a crucial influence on what was said and what was written. In order to explore the discursive practices endorsed by the pedagogical practices of the teachers this thesis examines teacher discourse as reflected in the transcripts. The teachers were also interviewed. The teacher talk in the transcripts and the interviews were interrogated using a coding process.

What emerged was the researcher's and teachers' reading of the teachers' pedagogical positions, discourses and practices towards the teaching of narrative texts. The thesis attempts to locate the teachers within discourses of pedagogy currently available and subjects the discourses to critical analysis. It does not claim that there is one right pedagogy in currency which would transform the English classroom. It acknowledges that there are limits to each of the pedagogical discourses available. The thesis suggests an alternative pedagogical discourse to achieve some of the emancipatory aims of a Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse.

6.2 Coding Processes

6.2.1 Textual Data

The coding process for the teachers' contribution to the research process was a modification of that used for the students and loosely based on that suggested by Strauss & Corbin (1990). After the transcripts were collected the teachers were interviewed by the researcher to explore their intentions in teaching narrative texts. Neither the teachers' intentions nor their pedagogical discourses were discussed during the collection of the data.

After the data was collected and the transcripts were typed, the teachers were interviewed. They did most of the talking, making explicit what they intended to do when teaching narrative texts and linking their purposes with what they knew of current literary and pedagogical theory. The researcher started the interview

with the question: 'What do you intend to do when you are teaching narrative texts?' The questions were open but at the same time focused on the phenomena under investigation. Neither of the teachers had any difficulty describing their intentions. They were both experienced teachers who were willing to share their ideas, purposes and theories. The interviews were unstructured. The researcher took notes on their comments, made a tape of the interview and completed the transcription after the interview using the tape as confirmation.

As the transcripts and the interviews were coded for the processes used by the students it became increasingly evident that the pedagogical discourses that informed teaching practice influenced the discourses which were available in the classroom to teachers and students. In the discussion of each of the narrative texts, the teachers' questions, comments and directions predominated over those of the students. The teacher, in each case, responded more than did either the boys or the girls.

6.2.2 Pedagogical Discourses

The teachers were influenced by three dominant pedagogical discourses of teaching of narrative texts each of which has currency in secondary English classrooms. The thesis identified the chief characteristics of the three pedagogical discourses drawing on current theory and published work on the teaching of narrative texts (Patterson, Mellor & O'Neill, 1994).

6.3 Open Coding

6.3.1 Models of Pedagogical Discourse

In the process of open coding each statement or question of the teachers in the transcripts was labelled according to the characteristics identified. The characteristics of the pedagogical discourses were used in a similar way to the thematic work which was used to interrogate the transcripts. A profile for each of the teachers was developed on the basis of their location in one or more of the three pedagogical discourses of the teaching of narrative texts.

Pedagogical discourses of the teaching of narrative texts which have had powerful influences both implicit and explicit on what it is that teachers of English intend to do, and actually do, when they are engaged in the process of the teaching of narrative texts (Patterson, Mellor & O'Neill, 1994). The reading of narrative texts in English classrooms is constituted by historically, socially and culturally specific practices which construct texts and readers in particular ways (Gilbert, 1991).

6.3.2 Characteristics of Three Pedagogical Discourses

The following three figures identified the characteristics which comprised each of the three dominant pedagogical discourses of the teaching of narrative texts drawn from the work of Mellor and Patterson (1994) and Hunter (1988).

Figure 1 identifies the main pedagogical purposes of the Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse.

FIGURE 1

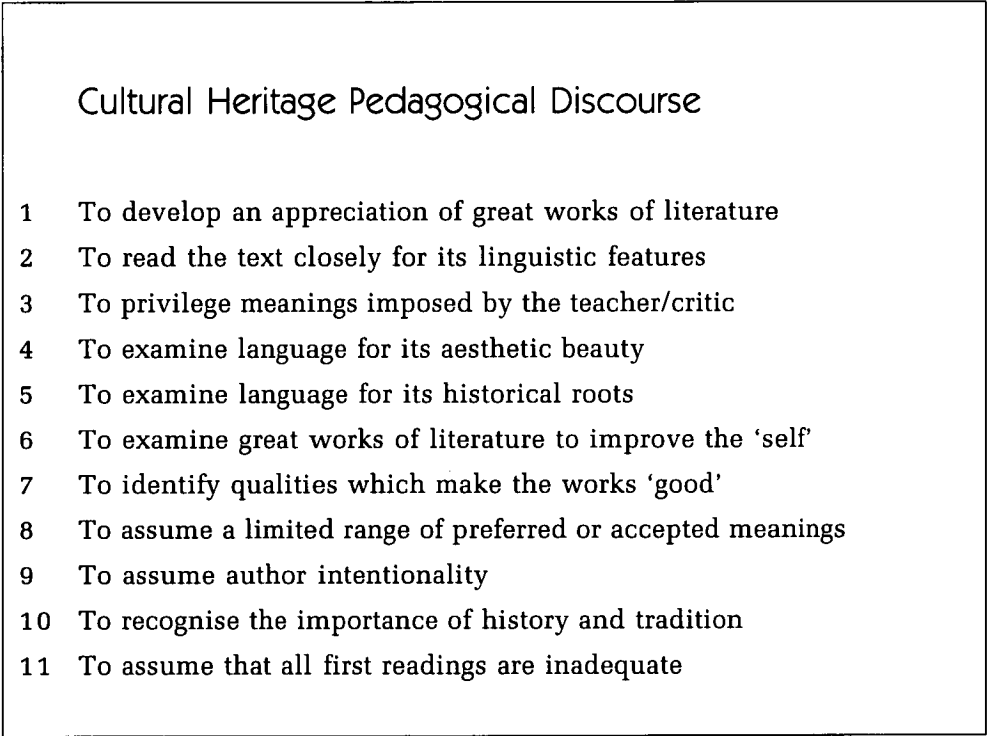


Figure 2 identifies the main pedagogical purposes of the Personal Response Discourse.

FIGURE 2

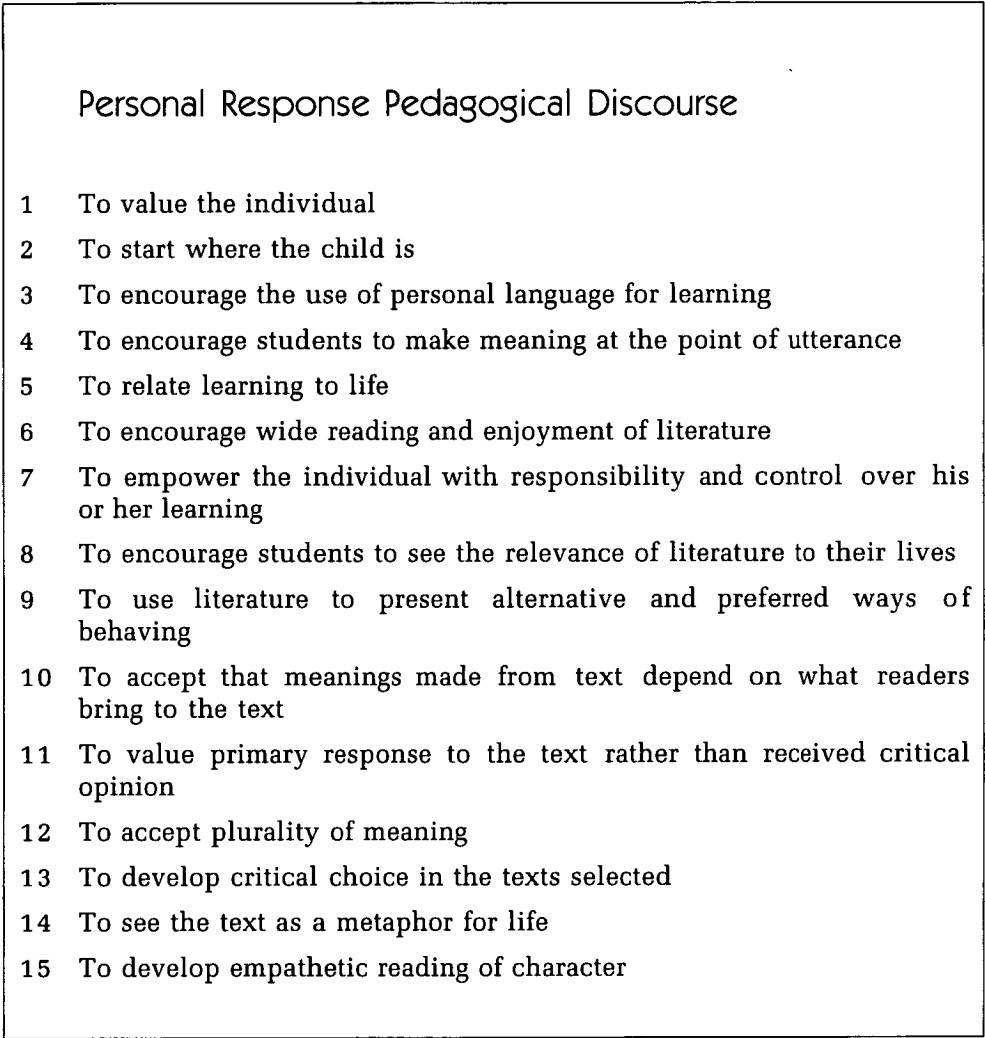


Figure 3 identifies the main pedagogical purposes of the Critical Literacy Discourse.

FIGURE 3

Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse	
1	To develop awareness of text as construction
2	To encourage considered discussion of divergent readings
3	To discuss how readings are constructed
4	To identify the grounds on which might readings be defended or challenged
5	To reveal how the reader is positioned by the text
6	To identify what sets of attitudes and values are privileged by particular readings
7	To encourage a consideration of all textual details/ conflicting details/ gaps and silences/ cultural assumptions, values and attitudes
8	To generate meanings that are not constrained by the fallacy of writer intentionality
9	To encourage the construction of divergent/resistant readings
10	To develop critically conscious readings which theorise about the text as historically, culturally and politically produced
11	To investigate the ideologies encoded by the text
12	To examine the power of dominant readings

The transcripts were interrogated for each of the characteristics identified in the three models of the teaching of narrative texts and the teachers were interviewed by the researcher to discover their purposes when teaching narrative texts. The transcripts of the teachers, one female and one male, were examined and discussed separately. Rather than identifying categories and codes, a profile for each of the teachers was developed. The profiles are based on the researcher's and teachers' readings of how the teachers are located in each of the three discourses.

6.4 Teacher One

6.4.1 Female Teacher: A Profile

Teacher one taught the first two texts, *Peter* (Walker, 1991) and *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992). A coding of her transcripts revealed that she operated in two main discourses, one was the organisational discourse which saw to discipline and order in the class, and two the Personal Response Discourse for the discussion of narrative texts. The Personal Response Discourse had two main functions, one to invite an empathetic response, and two to relate the text to life. She acknowledged in the interview and discussions that although she valued the personal response of the students, she was highly influenced in her thinking, but not necessarily in her practice, by a Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse.

6.4.2 Cultural Heritage Discourse: Teacher One

In her teaching of narrative texts the female teacher indicated her love and appreciation of literature and attempted to convey that to the students. While this can be a characteristic of the Personal Response Discourse it is also a most important aspect of the Cultural Heritage Discourse. In the interview with the researcher she located herself in the Cultural Heritage Discourse of the teaching of narrative texts, explaining the influence of her studies of literature at University in the 1960s and her embeddedness in the Leavisite tradition. The view of literature teaching as advocated by the Leavisites influenced her early teaching, especially when preparing Grade eleven and twelve students for their final examinations. She emphasised the importance of teaching great works, or the canon of literature, and her stated aim in the interview was to continue to introduce the students to worthwhile works of literature. While she recognised that the three narrative texts selected for the research were not part of the established canon, she claimed aesthetic worth due to their place as part of a canon of children's literature as prize-winning or short-listed texts. She emphasised the importance of preparing her students to answer examination questions, developing an appreciation of the literary tradition, acquiring the skills to write an examination essay which reveal a knowledge of the text, the ability to substantiate points of view and a knowledge of what the examination system requires of an English literature student. She stated that she was relieved not to have so many constraints on her current teaching with Grades seven to ten where she is happy to operate in the discourse of Personal Response. She emphasised the importance of enthusing her students about literature; but mainly through encouraging a personal response. The love of literature encouraged was not connected with the Great Tradition or a canonical view of literature; instead it was the development of a love a literature through the enthusiasm of the teacher regardless of the quality of the narrative text. Nevertheless she saw the importance of selecting what she considered a piece of 'quality' literature for the improvement of self, although this purpose was never made explicit to the students.

Although the teacher located herself in a Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse, especially in her appreciation of the great works and her desire for the students to replicate her appreciation, she recognised that at the lower levels of the secondary school there was not so much pressure to prepare students for examinations which required approaches to narrative texts appropriate to a Cultural Heritage Discourse. There were many aspects typical of the Cultural Heritage Discourse which she did not use. She claimed to never impose her own meanings nor those of the critics. She did not examine the language of the text closely, nor look for its historical roots. She assumed that the first reading was an inadequate one and that further engagement with the text would deepen and extend the initial reading.

She assumed that the engagement with works of literature would improve the self. For instance, she considered that the novel, *Peter* (Walker, 1991) was a quality text as it was a short-listed for the Australian Children's Book Award. She also assumed that engagement with this text and the issues that it raised concerning prejudice, homosexuality, sexuality, masculinity, femininity, divorce, peer group influence and relationships, would broaden the views of the students, opening doors for them which might otherwise not be opened. While she stated this intention in the interview she did not make her intention explicit to the students.

In the interview the female teacher stated, 'The love of literature is intrinsic to teaching and it should become important to the students and have a lasting impression on their lives'. She wanted the students to develop a pleasure in the delights of reading, a love of language and have new worlds opened up to them which they might otherwise not experience. She assumed that the students would recognise and endorse this view. Even if the narrative text was not part of the recognised canon, it would be an example of a text which is a modified version of the quality texts which would be read in Grades eleven and twelve.

In some cases the narrative text could have qualities of popular cultural texts if they were more appropriate to the interests of the group. There was evidence in the interview that the teacher recognised that she was operating in contradictory discourses. While she was able to articulate the different discourses in which she was operating, there was no attempt as a conscious pedagogical practice to reconcile the tensions which exist between aspects of the Cultural Heritage and the Personal Response discourses.

6.4.3 Personal Response Discourse: Teacher One

Although Teacher One's practice demonstrated many of the characteristics of a Cultural Heritage Discourse, analysis of the transcripts indicated that she was firmly located in a Personal Response Discourse. Most of the purposes of a Personal Response view of teaching were implicit. Her aims were to value the personal and the individual, which she demonstrated by the ways in which she treated the students, accepting their personal use of language as making meaning at

the point of utterance and encouraging them to express their views. She encouraged the students to relate learning to life and judge the relevance of a narrative text by the degree of fit with the reader's own life. It was accepted that the meanings made from the text depended on what the readers brought to the text and that the students' primary response to the text was privileged over received critical opinion. She intended to empower the students by encouraging individual response and accepting their views. Narrative texts were selected on the grounds that they would present alternative and preferred ways of behaving and the opportunity to discuss these. The narrative text would be relevant to the lives of the students and would lead to an acceptance of plurality.

She encouraged two main responses, encouraging empathetic understanding and relating text to life, through which the other aims were achieved implicitly. The assumptions of a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse were implicit for both the teacher and the students. There was no moment in the discussion when the aims of the discourse were made explicit or needed to be made explicit. One of the important features of this discourse is that it does not need to be made explicit. There is an uncritical acceptance of whatever it is that the students say. The success of the discourse lies in the opportunity it provides to be free to express one's thoughts and feelings without constraint and that this freedom will result in a flowering or development of the students. Perhaps to make the discourse explicit is to spoil the discourse, to shatter the illusion, to significantly alter the pretence that every comment is of equal value.

The teacher encouraged an empathetic response to the characters and the events of the text. To encourage an empathetic response the teacher asked questions like, 'When does he do it?', 'What does it mean to be one of the boys?', 'What is he so scared of?', 'What is it about a being a sissy?', 'What sort of behaviour?', 'What are the male characteristics and the female characteristics? What does it mean to be a male in this book?', and 'Is Peter different?' These questions could also be read as asking for a factual answer or alluding to the constructedness of character traits. Sometimes the students gave factual answers and sometimes they responded empathically, but they rarely recognised the characters as constructions of the texts.

The following extract revealed the teacher encouraging an empathetic response to the issue of homosexuality.

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Teacher | What if it's your brother or sister who was gay? |
| Girl 1 | It wouldn't be a problem. It would be exactly the same person that you had grown up with. They would only not have a wife or husband only in the other way. Would you care? |
| Boy 1 | At first you might be a bit worried but after a while it would not matter. |

- Boy 2 I would beat him up but he's a bit big. I would like to beat him up.
- Boy 3 Yes, I would beat him up and if it made no difference I would beat him up again.
- Teacher So you think violence is a way of solving the problem?
- Boy 1 Yes.
- Teacher Am I right in thinking that if I were a lesbian, you would think it OK to be violent against me. Say you would throw stones at my house?
- Boy 1 Yes that's right.
- Teacher Even if it is my sexual preference that did not interfere with anyone else?
- Boy 3 Yes.
- Boy 4 Yes, I'd smash his balls in if it were me. Even if it was my brother.
- Teacher Well thank you Grade Nine. We will leave it there for today.

In this extract the teacher encouraged either an empathetic response or a factual answer in the following questions, 'What if it is your brother or sister who is gay?', 'So you think violence is a way of solving the problem?', 'Am I right in thinking that if I were a lesbian you would think it OK to be violent against me? Say you would throw stones at my house?', 'Even if it is my sexual preference that did not interfere with anyone else?' and 'Well thank you Grade Nine. We will leave it there for today'. The Personal Growth Pedagogical Discourse required her to invite response, value the responses, accept the responses and ask questions which give the students the opportunity to revise their opinions if they wish. She did not make judgments or openly disagree. Perhaps her final comment in this extract is sarcastic or exasperated, but because of her caring relationship with the students the sarcasm appeared to go over their heads. So it appeared that each of the students' responses was equally valued and respected and mostly not open to challenge. There was little opportunity to mediate between different responses or points of view with the result that the opinions of the students were left uninterrogated and intact. Perhaps there was implied criticism in the comments, 'Am I right in thinking that if I were a lesbian you would think it OK to be violent against me? Say you would throw stones at my house?' and, 'Even if it is my sexual preference that did not interfere with anyone else?' but these comments could also be read as seeking clarification and endorsing the students' rights to respond as they wished. The questions invite critical response and appear to be an attempt to persuade the students that homosexuality is not wrong. It could be read that she uses a particular kind of pedagogical discourse which is almost therapeutic, appearing non-judgmental but which is nevertheless an attempt to be persuasive. The boys' responses confirmed this latter reading in the reply, 'Yes, that's right'. The teacher maintained control over the discussion, encouraging short answers, questioning as many students as possible in order to include and endorse. In the main, the students were not encouraged to reflect, revise, elaborate or justify. The teacher asked questions respecting the answers regardless of the

content and the quality, while the students made assertions which they did not have to justify.

Many of the students did not respond, which is an acceptable aspect of a Personal Response Discourse in that nobody needs to feel that a response is compulsory. There were few teaching strategies employed to ensure that all students were engaged or that all students responded verbally to the text. They were expected to do so in the compulsory writing. A Personal Response Discourse gives the appearance of inclusion and equity yet endorses silence and sees it as unproblematic and without need of critique and analysis. Further, because the discourse does not allow for interrogation of the personal responses, the responses of most students were unchallenged. Thus responses that closed possibilities for inclusion and equity were implicitly endorsed. Students with tentative readings, oppositional readings or minority readings have little voice in a classroom where the Personal Response Discourse is the dominant one. This is partly because of the jostling in the classroom for the right to speak and partly because the discourse requires that students disclose personal aspects of themselves, which is perhaps difficult for some students.

The teacher also asked questions which invited the students to relate the text to their lives. For instance, there were questions like, 'How typical is this? Is this only a story?', 'OK, you know what happens. Tony does not like his friend to be thought of as gay. Is this how the conversation would go?', 'Is this a typical response about his son being gay?', 'What would your father do about it?' and, 'We are trying to see if we believe in these characters'. Like the empathetic response, the questions which invited the students to relate the text to life located them in a discourse which saw life and text as interchangeable and able to be spoken about as if they were of the same order of reality. Where a discussion of life experience is privileged in the classroom then there is the possibility that the text is rendered invisible.

Close textual response or analysis was not an important part of the discourse of Personal Response, which values the personal. References to the text were rare. The only instances in the text where the teacher referred the students to the text were 'What does he mean when he says, "The coward in me cries with relief"? On page 28 there is a gap in the text, "Dad pays Vince's way through Law School. And if that was supposed to convince me I could tell my father I was gay and live through the experience, it didn't." Can you rephrase that Josh? Is he confused about his sexuality, Stephen? Find me the part', and, 'If you are not sure go back to the text'. In only a few cases did the students return to the text for clarification. Instead they continued to assert their views without reference to the text. Rather than examine the text the students easily diverted to another topic and they did not look to the text for explanation, clarification or substantiation. The Personal Response Discourse in its privileging of the personal over the text at first appears

to look like an invitation to explore the text but in the end is an uncritical endorsement of personal response.

6.4.4 Critical Literacy Discourse: Teacher One

In the interview, the female teacher talked about the need to have knowledge of current literary theory and for these theories to inform teaching practice. She acknowledged the need to question the current theories, including Critical Literacy, and admitted that once she thought that there was a right way to teach narrative texts, but that now she had to question the certainty of her discourse. She was in the process of interrogating her own pedagogical practices and acknowledged the difficulties of doing this. She recognised the importance of multiplicity as opposed to the right answer but the multiplicity and diversity she endorsed was not questioned.

Although she endorsed the aims of Critical Literacy she had difficulty in reconciling a Personal Response Discourse with that of Critical Literacy. She rarely referred to the text as a construction or even as a text. However, she treated the text as a construction with questions like, 'In the novel', or, 'On page thirty-three' and proceeded to ask questions about the characters. The discussions which ensued were embedded in the Personal Response Discourse, which tended to treat the characters and their lives as if they were real people for whom the participants in the discussion have sympathy. This discourse is so powerful and so seductive that it is difficult to make the shift and begin to examine the text and the characters as constructions of the text and the author. Because the discourse focused on empathetic responses which saw the characters as real, there was no opportunity for the students to defend the grounds on which they proposed their meanings. The students were able to assert their meanings without interrogation or questioning. Because the text was not seen as a construction there was no opportunity to deconstruct divergent readings, the positions offered to readers by the text, to identify privileged readings, to investigate ideologies encoded by the text or to examine the power of dominant readings. The Discourse of Critical Literacy did not easily fit into the predominant discourses of the classroom for both teacher and students.

6.4.5 Location of Teacher One

Teacher One was firmly located in the Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse. She considered that enjoyment of the text and uninterrogated responses were the most important aspects of teaching narrative texts and was concerned that a questioning of the ideologies encoded by the text or an insistence on providing dominant readings would interfere with the potential enjoyment to be gained. Yet there is implied criticism of the students' responses in her questions and statements, but they occur within a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse which frames and supports different responses. She stated that it was much more

important that the students enjoyed their experience of narrative texts through the encouragement of personal response than to stultify enjoyment by too much explicit teaching of narrative theories, literary terms, and processes of analysis, which would destroy the work for the students. While she used the term 'critical literacy' and acknowledged that Critical Literacy had implications for what is taught and how it is taught, the multiplicity she referred to emerged as a variety of personal responses rather than a critical interrogation of the texts which resulted in a range of competing meanings. For instance, in the transcripts there was evidence that she tried to encourage multiplicity. She said, 'Let's stop. Two different reactions. Great! Two different reactions!' It was difficult to decide whether this was a clarification of meaning or a genuine endorsement of two differing and competing points of view. She allowed multiple or divergent readings but because of her location in the discourse of personal growth the variety of student meanings remained mostly intact and uncontested. Where divergent meanings were contested by students it was the dominant student meaning which seemed to prevail. The teacher did not position herself to interfere in this negotiation of meaning and implicitly endorsed the dominant student reading even when she did not endorse the meaning herself. Therefore there was no opportunity to discuss how meanings were constructed or locate grounds on which readings might be defended or challenged. The students were not encouraged to consider how they might be positioned by the texts nor did they discuss what sets of attitudes and values were privileged by particular readings of a text.

The Personal Response Discourse of the teaching of narrative texts can result in the maintenance of already existing different positions for females and males. Although this was not the teacher's stated purpose, in fact it was the opposite, the dominant pedagogical discourse encouraged the students to adopt the feminine and masculine positions within which they were already embedded. Competing discourses were not questioned. The texts and the teaching of the texts positioned females and males differently and unequally, reproducing the inequality at work in the school and society at large.

6.5 Teacher Two

6.5.1 Male Teacher: A Profile

The characteristics of the three pedagogical discourses were applied to the transcripts of Teacher Two, the male teacher, who taught the novel *Dougy* (1993). Coding of the transcripts revealed that he operated in each of the three discourses. He straddled the discourses, at times operating in one or other of them, shifting from one to the other when he thought appropriate. In his interview he said he was 'sometimes a Leavisite, sometimes a Jack Thompson, sometimes an amalgam'. He resisted placing himself in one position, insisting that he was reluctant to locate himself in one discourse, asserting that a range of views was important and that there was value in all the views and that all discourses would be used at different times for different purposes. His pedagogical discourses did not include the

necessity of making the intentions of the teaching explicit in the hope that this practice opens a range of possibilities for the students that are closed down when purposes are made explicit.

6.5.2 Cultural Heritage Discourse: Teacher Two

Teacher Two explicitly stated his purpose to select great works of literature for student attention even if the great literature was not at a level appropriate for the students. He talked about the importance of Shakespeare both for its aesthetic qualities and the issues of power that are raised. In the interview he emphasised the importance of selecting texts which are 'crafted carefully'. Here he was most likely positioning himself as a critic with aesthetic sensibilities, one who can judge the qualities of the language.

It could be assumed that he intended the students to develop an appreciation of literature, typical of a Cultural Heritage Discourse, because he selected a text which was considered a worthwhile one as it was a short-listed text for the Australian Children's Book of the Year Award. There were times when he insisted on a close scrutiny of the text. He asked questions like, 'Where is the book set?', 'Where do Dougy and Gracey live?' and, 'What are the ways out of this town, a small town?' which invited recapitulation or recall of the events of the novel. These questions could be seen to be part of the discourse of Cultural Heritage as they invited the students to examine the text closely, to explore the language of the text and to begin to appreciate what the text is achieving. At the same time the questions could also be seen to be inviting answers which appear to be factual.

Although in the interview he acknowledged the importance of the Cultural Heritage view, there were many characteristics that were not included in his pedagogical discourses. His discourse as revealed in the transcripts showed no evidence of concern to better the self through the encounter with literature, though this could have been an implicit purpose. The discourse did not include an imposition of meanings, either his own or those of current or past literary critics. An aesthetic response was invited when he asked, 'Should it have been short-listed?' and, 'Is it better than *Peter*?' However, the students were not taught a discourse which would enable them to identify the qualities which make a work good. They may also have been reluctant to respond. The teacher then asked for a show of hands to identify the best book which suggested that there are differences in the aesthetic value in narrative texts. His questions often included an assumption of author intentionality in the question, 'What does James Moloney think about violence?' One girl replied, 'He would not like it'. When asked why, she said that she did not know and the discussion ended. The pedagogical discourse encouraged a close look at the text but the students generally did not have the discourse in which to reply or they were unwilling to do so.

6.5.3 Personal Response Discourse: Teacher Two

While Teacher Two valued many of the aspects of a Cultural Heritage Discourse to teaching, he also located himself in a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse in his interview. In the interview he stated that he felt it was important that students are encouraged to respond on their own as he said, 'Often this is the only one and this is inadequate or different from a more reflected one'. He stated that the students needed to be guided in their responses and to be helped to make connections.

In the transcripts, the Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse demonstrated that individual opinion was valued as was the encouragement of personal response. It included questions like, 'What do you think, Simon?' and, 'Sarah, what is your favourite?' He started where he thought the students were, discussing issues which he thought would interest them. He encouraged a discussion of violence and guns, accepting that the students would use their personal language to express their opinions with the purpose to learn. For instance, he accepted without question Simon's comment, 'The book sucks. I just didn't like it at all. I didn't like the way it was written'. This reply could also be interpreted as the acceptance by the teacher of the importance of students making meaning at the point of utterance. The students appeared to feel free to say what they thought and enjoyed doing so with teacher encouragement.

The teacher, as part of a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse, encouraged the students to express their likes and dislikes about the books they had read. He said, 'We are going to find out what you think about the book. How many people did not like it?' The students made comments like, 'It was boring at the start', and 'Nothing happened. It got better at the end. There was not enough happening. Not enough action'. The opinions were not elaborated.

Teacher Two also encouraged the students to relate narrative texts to life. When he asked where the novel was set, he tried to get the students to link the town with towns they knew and the suburb in which they lived. He said, 'Where is the book set? Is it like our suburb?' 'What is like their town?' 'What are the ways out of this town?' and, 'The beginning of the chapter talks about drink-about alcohol. I want you to ponder about that', and, 'How many of you have been shooting?'

An important part of his pedagogical discourse was to show how the book was relevant to the lives of the students. In the discussion of the setting, he attempted to link the outback setting with the lives of the students. When he asked the students if they had been shooting, he attempted to link the life experiences of the characters in the text with those of the students in the class. As most of the boys had been shooting, they were able to discuss whether they thought the author had described the occasion with authenticity and how it related to their lives. The teacher also invited the boys to share an experience of a car accident as a means of

helping them to see the relevance of the book to their lives and to value their personal experiences. This episode also recognised that the meanings that the students make depend on the meaning they bring to the text.

A question like, 'What characters would you like to be marooned with?' encouraged an empathetic response to the characters, it invited the students to relate narrative texts to their lives and it encouraged them to think of the characters as real. There could have been an acceptance of plurality in that all the students' answers were accepted as equally relevant except that the students mostly gave factual answers. When the teacher asked them if they would like to be marooned with specific characters, there were several 'No's' with no elaboration. One of the girls said, 'He's OK. He's calm. He's a good guy' and another girl said 'Yes, he's calm. He's capable'. When one of the girls questioned the calmness of the character saying, 'He wasn't calm when Kendall got shot', there was no further conversation or debate, her comment was accepted as equal in value to the others, an endorsement of the value of personal response.

6.5.4 Critical Literacy Discourse: Teacher Two

Teacher Two showed an awareness of the importance of developing critical literacy. This was evident in both the transcripts and the interview. In the interview he identified the importance of the development of critical literacy at the same time insisting that his discourse was eclectic and that he used whatever discourse he felt was appropriate at the time.

As part of a Critical Literacy Discourse he attempted to show the text as ideological construction. When he said, 'Moloney chooses to have Tiny and Brett there. Is that believable?' he drew attention to the text as a construction of the author and questioned the credibility of what the author had constructed. Similarly, with the questions: 'Why did Moloney have Kendall killed? Perhaps it would have been better to have Cooper killed?', 'Come back to the sentence. What is Moloney saying is the cause?' and, 'Couldn't Moloney have chosen another character? Why Tiny?' The teacher highlighted the choices that authors have to make in constructing the events of the story. He invited the students to consider the construction, to comment on it and to reconstruct if they thought it appropriate. Yet what the students did was to respond to the characters as if they were real, locating themselves firmly in a Personal Response Discourse. One female student, however, commented, 'No, the characters are too different. They would not have said the opposite things'. This response was ambiguous. She tried hard to answer the teacher's question but because a Critical Literacy Discourse was not available to her, she was limited by the Personal Response Discourse in which the demonstration of empathy towards the characters is crucial. Her first comment, 'No, the characters are too different', could have been a recognition of the characters as constructions; but the second comment, 'They would not have said

the opposite things', relocated her in the discourse which saw the characters as if they were real.

Aspects of a Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse used by the teacher also included valuing a close look at the language of the text. He asked, 'Why does James Moloney use the phrase on page fifteen, "gobbled up by the grown-ups way of looking at Gracey's good luck". What is unusual? We'll come back to that. Were they right to be angry? Why were they angry?' The first half of the question focused on the language, but the second half, 'Were they right to be angry? Why were they angry?' invited a personal response. Even when he invited the students to look at the language when he asked, 'Come back to the sentence', the students continued to discuss the characters as if they were real. The students did not have available to them a discourse of critical analysis or they were not prepared to use it. They much preferred the discourse of personal response and it was very difficult to shift them.

The teacher worked hard to encourage close textual analysis. The following transcript revealed how this was done.

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Teacher | How is 'Gracey' written? |
| Girl 1 | From different points of view. |
| Teacher | How is this written? |
| Boy 1 | From third person as if someone was watching. |
| Teacher | I'll read you a bit. What is that? |
| Girl 1 | It is third person. As if someone is telling you. |
| Teacher | How is 'Gracey' written? |
| Girl 1 | Not the same. Not really. |
| Teacher | I'll read you a bit from 'Gracey'. How is the book [Doug] organised? Three first person narratives – Gracey, Doug and the policeman. 'Doug' is a limited third person because it only shows you what Doug knows. In 'Gracey' you get different points of view, you get different perspectives. Does Doug always tell us the truth in 'Gracey'? |
| Boy 1 | No. |
| Teacher | In 'Doug'? |
| Boy 1 | Yes. |
| Teacher | You have to be careful when ready to tell whether the narrator is telling the truth. Why does Moloney use different methods? |
| Girl 2 | For a change. |
| Boy 2 | The first person is more limited. You only have one point of view. |

This passage of transcript is an attempt on the part of the teacher to reveal how the text was constructed. When he asked, 'How is "Gracey" written?', 'How is this written?', 'How is the book organised?' and 'Why does Moloney use different methods?' he invited the students to look at the way the text was constructed in order to deconstruct it. The students found this difficult to do as they were embedded in a personal response pedagogy and found it difficult to include any other response to narrative texts.

The teacher invited the students to examine the different points of view from which the story was narrated when he commented: 'I'll read you a bit from "Gracey". How is the book [*Dougy*] organised? Three first person narratives – Gracey, Dougy and the policeman. Dougy is a limited third person because it only shows you what Dougy knows. In "Gracey" you get different points of view, you get different perspectives. Does Dougy always tell us the truth in "Dougy"?' These questions could have led to a discussion of reader positioning but despite the efforts of the teacher such a discussion did not ensue.

While the questions of the teacher had potential for inviting a Critical Literacy response to the text, they can also have been located as part of the Cultural Heritage discourse. The responses from the students were few. The teacher often answered his own questions and made the information didactic. While he talked about the text as if it was constructed, he talked about the characters as if they were real and the students responded as if they were real. The narrative methodology was not interrogated, rather it was presented as a given. The responses were aimed at confirming the given. A student answered first, 'No', then, 'Yes', and no elaboration was asked for or given. The responses could be seen as part of the Personal Response Discourse because the students were able to reply only as if the characters were real and not as if they were constructions of the text. One male response was, 'The first person is more limited. You only have one point of view'. This could be seen as an acknowledgement of the text as construction, it could also be seen as affirming information that the teacher had presented as fact earlier.

6.5.5 Location of Teacher Two

Although Teacher Two stated explicitly in the interview that he used an eclectic discourse in the teaching of narrative texts, his main practice was located in the Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse. Like Teacher One he considered that enjoyment of the text and uninterrogated responses were the most important aspects of teaching narrative texts and was concerned that a questioning of the ideologies encoded by the text or an insistence on providing dominant readings would interfere with the potential enjoyment to be gained. He, too, affirmed that it was much more important that the students enjoyed their experience of narrative texts through the encouragement of personal response than to run the risk of

stultifying enjoyment by too much explicit teaching of narrative theories, literary terms, and processes of analysis, which would destroy the work for the students.

Although the teacher operated in the three models of teaching, he was never explicit with the students about which one he was using as he moved from one to the other. At times he moved from one discourse to another in the same question so that the students responded in the ways in which they were most comfortable and their responses were not questioned. He was located in the Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse and encouraged the engagement of the students. Because his questions were often closed, inviting a short, right or wrong answer, he overlaid the Personal Response with the Cultural Heritage Discourse. Because he defined the territory of discussion more closely, he expected right or wrong answers and gave the students the information he wanted them to know. He seemed to have grafted the Personal Response onto the Cultural Heritage Discourse in a way which potentially limited both. The students, however, operated from the learned Personal Response Discourse, talking and writing about their own experiences, expressing their thoughts and feelings verbally and in writing, and giving and receiving feedback from each other. The teacher acted as arbitrator and rarely challenged the responses of the students.

6.6 Public Languages

6.6.1 Classroom Management and Teacher Intentions

The system of discipline was made public in the classroom and available for comment while the pedagogical purposes were generally left unclear. This thesis does not question the need for teachers to manage their classes, what is of interest is the form it takes and what it makes possible. The system of discipline was overt while the pedagogical purposes of the teachers were not. There was a contrast between the overt control of behaviour and the invitation to say anything they want. The teachers supported the regime of power that existed in the school and much of this was implicit. It was accepted as a structural constraint by both teachers. It was accepted that a well-managed school and classroom operated in the interests of the both the students and the teachers. Rather than being seen as an exercise of authority, it was viewed as an act of liberatory benevolence which enabled the students to be free to learn and the teachers free to teach. But this regime was constantly contested by the students, who did not experience the benevolence that was intended. Rather they seemed to see it as an act of control which was repressive and not enabling. The students, particularly the boys, constantly resisted control; they vied for power in the discussions; they used a variety of methods to attract the attention of the teacher and they frequently diverted the discussion to whatever it was that they wanted to discuss. They interrupted and showed contempt for the girls. Their contestation forced the issue of control to be overt. The teachers controlled the pedagogical agenda and they also controlled the students' behaviour. Both teachers exerted their authority

explicitly, making it plain to the students the types of behaviour which were unacceptable. They also controlled the range of meanings that the students could construct.

6.6.2 Teacher Instructions

The teachers made it very clear what they wanted the students to do with the type of instructions which are often necessary and expected. Each lesson would begin with clear instructions about where to sit, what books to get out, what equipment would be needed and directions about what was to be done during the lesson. Both teachers gave instructions which are very familiar in classrooms, like: 'We are going to read the book *Peter*, Chapter One; I want people to read'; 'I'll be the narrator for about one page. Then I would like Mark to take over'; 'Right. Keep reading'; 'Let's pause. What is going on?'

6.6.3 Reprovals

Behaviour was controlled with reprovals, some in the negative and some in the affirmative, like: 'Don't call out Josh!'; 'Boys keep quiet. Take notice of Rebecca. I should not have to remind you'; 'I asked one person and got five answers'; 'No, Josh, let Peta have a go'; and 'Don't be so indulgent.' Most of the reprovals were directed at boys. On one level, the teacher was explicit about what type of behaviour was not acceptable, but what was not made clear was the grounds on which these reprovals were being made. The responses were made to the immediate and the isolated and were not seen as patterns of behaviour which could be addressed.

6.6.4 Negotiations and Gender

There was no explicit negotiation of the values and expectations of the behaviour in the classroom. As with the pedagogical purposes, the standards of behaviour, though expected, were not discussed or negotiated. This method could be ultimately disempowering to the students because it was a way of controlling them through repetitive criticism rather than through an explicit negotiation of values and expectations. Nor did the teachers model the sort of responses they expected of the students. To be focused on in this way could have the effect of positioning the student as 'naughty boy', simultaneously privileging and disempowering him. Some of the boys were only ever spoken to in this way. The reprovals had the potential to locate students in a particular subject position as the one which was the most attractive and available but not necessarily the most empowering. Most of the reprovals were phrased in the negative and there was no affirmation that the student might have something interesting to contribute to the discussion. Rather the reprovals assumed and constructed a certain type of masculinity which positioned the boys as uncooperative and nuisances, alienating them from participating equally. The teachers were complicit in reproducing

particular subject positions for the boys and yet criticised the boys when they adopted those subject positions. The teachers encouraged expression while practising repression.

6.6.5 Problematisation of Behaviour

Implied reprovals, not expressed in the negative nor direct reprovals, were present in statements like: 'Do you boys at the back want to participate?'; 'You boys are still talking. Could you move?' and, 'Why are you all being so obnoxious today? What is the problem? Every time a question is asked you are all bubbling and talking at once.' The teachers problematised the students' behaviour but they did not problematise the ways in which they responded to the perceived problem, nor did they negotiate their perceptions with the students. What was set up was a pattern from which it was difficult to emerge without the participants losing face.

6.6.6 Student Response to Teacher Control

While there seemed to be a simmering resistance and discontent it was rare that the students openly defied the teachers' instructions. If they resisted, it was more likely to be a silent resistance, a quiet refusal to participate. If resistance was voiced, then capitulation usually followed. The resistance was a contestation of the power of the teacher and a signalling of personal power. As such it was important to voice but not to win.

6.7 Private Languages

6.7.1 Pedagogical Purposes of the Teachers

The pedagogical intentions of the teachers were kept private in the context of the classroom. As part of the hidden or invisible curriculum and pedagogy, the intentions were assumed to inform the teaching and were never made explicit to the students. Nevertheless the teachers controlled what was able to be discussed in the English lesson. Neither of the teachers interrogated their own pedagogy with the view to investigating the meaning-making procedures they favoured, which ones they marginalised and whose interests their pedagogies served. Nor did they interrogate the students' opinions in a way that encouraged self-reflection and assessment. Neither of the teachers encouraged or allowed uncomfortable questions of power relations to be asked, nor did they make visible the discourses they had to respond to texts. Both teachers were in the main located in a pedagogical discourse of Personal Response in which difference, multiplicity and even resistance to the text on the part of the interpreting subject was accepted. In neither case was a range of powerful educational discourses made available. These discourses could have provided the students with access to critical discourses in

order to deconstruct texts. It is pedagogically naive to expect students to use strategies of resistance without equipping them with the discourses that make resistance possible (Kramer-Dahl, 1993).

The teachers claimed that at the heart of what they wanted to do was to consider the students' needs and interests and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. What both teachers hoped was that they created the sort of enabling classroom environment in which students felt free to be honest, to take individual initiative and to work in a co-operative way. Both teachers attempted to break down the barriers that have traditionally existed between teacher and student and provide a context where the student's opinions, feelings and desires were taken into account.

6.7.2 Pedagogical Influences

The teachers had an important influence of the discussions, mainly taking the form of questions which the students were invited to answer. The teachers assumed positions of authority in the classroom and over the content of the discussion. The students were complicit in supporting the agenda of the teacher and colluded in using the discourses they had learned in the class (Fuller & Lee, 1997). They did not question the possible tension between the power and authority which existed in the classroom and the freedom to express a range of meanings (Green, 1986:4).

6.7.3 Pedagogical Intentions and Gender

Both teachers were aware of gender issues in education; however, neither of them mentioned in their interviews a link between the pedagogy they espoused and the creation and maintenance of gendered subjectivities. The relationship between power and masculinity was not discussed nor was the potential for English to be read as a feminine subject seen as an issue (Green, 1986:10). Although the teachers intended to provide a context in which the students were free to state their opinions, and their intended pedagogy was to encourage individual freedom and social change, the context was not one in which the students were able to deliberate freely and expect that equal consideration was given to all viewpoints. The students themselves were not positioned equally and there were hierarchies of power among them. Both teachers and students were located in the hierarchies of power which existed in the school and in the classroom. In fact little attempt was made to provide the students with the discourses which would have enabled them to critically analyse the discourses in which they were all embedded.

6.7.4 Consequences of an Open Pedagogy

Control inheres in interpersonal communication in a context where the maximum surveillance is possible ... The form of transmission of an invisible pedagogy encourages more of [a student] to be made public, and

so more of [the student] is available for direct and indirect surveillance and control (Bernstein, 1977:135).

The invisibility of the constraints in a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse does not mean that they did not exist and since they were invisible, they can be potentially more limiting to students. An apparent pedagogical context of freedom can be more coercive and controlling than more openly authoritarian practices are.

6.7.5 Teacher Power

The power of the teacher was made explicit in the classroom through the overt disciplinary methods used by both teachers but not in the Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse. Much of their time was spent controlling the actions of the students, mostly the boys, and it was accepted by both teachers and students that this regime should exist despite some minor resistances by both girls and boys. Although both teachers were firmly located in a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse, they did not recognise the contradictions between a masculinist discourse to discipline in which control was achieved through power and enactments of power and a pedagogical discourse which recognised and endorsed negotiation, co-operation and the freedom to express personal readings (Green, 1986:4).

6.7.6 Teachers Implicit Assumptions about Texts

The pedagogical discourses of the teachers had an implicit assumption that the first reading of the text was an inadequate one, one which had to be explored further, reflected upon and readjusted until a more refined reading was achieved. It was assumed that there was a clearer meaning to be gained, an assumption which implies that there is a clearer and more accurate meaning to be found. This was juxtaposed against the contradictory assumption that the students were free to make their own meanings. Neither of the teachers 'problematised' the readings of the students (Mellor & Patterson, 1994:24). Their pedagogical practices, in the main, accepted what it was that the students had to say. They began with the assumption that the students were to be encouraged to make their own meanings and that in the making of them the growth of the student would be encouraged if not ensured. Both teachers admitted in their interviews that they were reluctant to interfere with the readings of the students and that they valued highly the opportunity they provided the students to be free to make their own meanings.

6.7.7 Emergent Readings

Both teachers accepted as self-evident that the first reading was inadequate, that there was questioning of the text in the English classroom, but that student responses would not be further interrogated (Mellor and Patterson, 1994:25). They

also accepted that as teachers they were enabling rather than directive and that they did not teach readings of texts, rather they provided the context for the students' own meanings to emerge. Neither teacher made these assumptions explicit to the students. But both teachers and students seemed well practiced in participating in the pedagogy which operated. It was never asked which interpretations and meaning-making activities were privileged, which were marginalised and in whose interests the discussions took place. It was rarely asked why a reader's view might diverge, and when it was attempted, the discussion languished into one of assertions of multiple meanings.

Both teachers stated in their interviews that they loved narrative texts and that the discussion of specific text was to be valued as part of a student's education. They were enthusiastic about the exciting possibilities that the discussion of narrative texts offered, claiming that there was both intellectual development and increased enjoyment to be gained from exploring multiple interpretations of texts. They did not see that these discussions might be interpreted as interference into the students' process of constructing their own meanings. Rather they saw it as an exciting pedagogical discourse to encourage involvement of the students in the text they were reading and helping them to interpret that text. Their excitement and involvement were evident in their teaching, but the reasons for their commitment were not made available to the students.

6.7.8 Good Literature

Their pedagogical discourses included a belief that 'good' or 'worthwhile' literature must be challenging; that its meaning is ungraspable at first reading; that there will always be intricacies of meaning to be probed and uncovered; that there will never be a final meaning; but that through discussion, mediated gently by the teacher, readers come closer to an understanding of the meaning of the text, not necessarily a right meaning but one within an acceptable range. None of these assumptions were made explicit to the students during the English lessons. Both teachers stated in the interviews that they wanted to model for students a critical literacy. They both sought 'ways of unlocking textual power and turn(ing) it to their own uses' (Scholes, 1985:20). Although they both intended to empower the students by a critical interrogation of the text, the major discourse which operated in the classroom, that of Personal Response, did not allow them to achieve this purpose. This model of teaching leaves the reader

at the mercy of the ideologies encoded by texts and the power of the dominant readings which generally are made in the interests of the most powerful groups in society (Mellor & Patterson, 1994b:27).

6.7.9 Teachers' Questions

While the teachers expressed in their interviews a desire not to interfere too much with the readings of the students it was the teachers who questioned and commented and the students who responded. The students were capable of resisting the ideas of the teacher but only within the limits of what was acceptable in the English classroom. Students read 'as they have been taught to read' (Scholes, 1982:60). For instance, if the actions of a character in one of the texts were questioned, the readings were not problematised in terms of the characters being real. In the main, the teachers did not acknowledge that the characters were constructions and that it would have been possible to construct alternative possibilities for them. On the rare occasions when some of the students acknowledged the constructedness of characters, the moment quickly passed and they reverted to a discussion of them as if they were real and unchangeable, a discourse in which they were firmly embedded.

6.7.10 Pedagogy and Student Positioning

the 'self discovery' of social norms in a domain of organised experience overseen by a non-coercive teacher (Hunter, 1988:56).

The responses of the students were rarely interrogated by the 'non-coercive teacher' as suggested by Hunter (1988) beyond the expression of opinion. In the main most opinions were accepted by the teachers as legitimate. The students remained firmly located in their existing discourses in response to text. It was not that the teachers necessarily agreed with the responses of the students, in fact they stated firmly in their interviews that they were appalled at some of the attitudes that the students revealed about sexuality, homosexuality, violence, ethnicity, religion and Aboriginality, but they agreed that as teachers they were involved in contradictory discourses. As a result they constantly faced dilemmas which involved decisions about whether or not to intervene, to give their own responses, to call a reading wrong, ill-informed, racist, homophobic or sexist as opposed to privileging the students' initial responses.

Both teachers passionately believed in their pedagogical role of enabling the students to produce their own readings, to collaborate with the students in the interpretation of texts, while not interfering directly with the meanings the students produced, and to value the genuine response. They both hoped that the students would learn to value what they considered to be good literature and become critically conscious readers but that these qualities would emerge rather than being explicitly taught.

6.7.11 Pedagogy and Student Writing

The only form of writing the students did while studying the three texts was informal personal response in the form of a personal journal. Sometimes the students were given questions on the texts to answer, or they were asked to write an alternative chapter or to predict what might happen to one of the characters in the future, but they were also encouraged to include their personal responses to the texts. The journals were constructed as dialogue journals in which the students were instructed to feel free to share their thoughts and feelings about texts but also about their personal experiences with the teachers. The formulae for the journal entry appeared to be to write first about what they perceived in the text, often in the form of a retelling, then to comment on how they felt about their perceptions and finally to make links with their own personal feelings or experiences. The teachers asked the students to be honest and spontaneous in their journal entries and to use an authentic voice, as suggested by a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse, when responding to narrative texts. If the students wished, they could write in note form or as casually as they might in their personal diaries. Their writing was often fragmented and disjointed. The girls responded in more detail in their journals which supported the research which suggests that journal writing is 'caught up in the gender problematic' (Green 1986:5). Girls are more willing to write at length and to take up the journal writing genre than are boys.

The students were aware that they were writing for teachers who were experts and who had the power to judge the quality of what they received. In a sense then the students were asked to do something which they were not able to do. They were being asked to understand what the teachers meant when they instructed the students to write honestly and to write in an appropriate language. Yet the teachers mystified and kept secret how it was possible to do this (Lemke, 1988).

In classrooms where journal writing is the only type of writing, then there are serious consequences for the students. Individual experience is celebrated and the meanings made are unquestioned as long as they are honest and 'authentic'. While both teachers acknowledged the importance of developing competence both in literary response and writing, the only response that the students demonstrated was the 'highly insulated genre of Personal Response' (Kramer-Dahl, 1993:99). They were not given access to more formal forms of writing, during the period of the collection of the data, rather they were encouraged to express themselves freely, in any way they wanted. The teachers expected that through the writing process the students would come to an understanding that reading and writing were constructions, however, there was no evidence in the students' writing that any of them came to such a realisation. There was no explicit teaching of writing, nor any discussion of how the students might go about constructing a written text. In the absence of any explicit teaching of writing, the students could have been deprived of access to more powerful genres of argument and exposition which require critical thinking and knowledge of forms and structures of writing, including the appropriate language and syntax of which these genres are composed.

6.7.12 Multiple Positionings

The teachers' pedagogy implicitly suggested to the students that their uninterrogated readings were acceptable. The students were not expected, nor did they, produce either a self-reflexive response or a critically conscious response (Mellor & Patterson, 1994:38). If multiple readings were produced, they were accepted as equally valid and not questioned by the teachers. Despite this the teachers valued certain kinds of responses – the elaborated rather than the truncated in talk and the accurately expressed in terms of grammatical expression and spelling rather than the error laden in writing – over others and this was evident in their assessment procedures. As the assessment of the writing was not made available until the end of the year, assessment and learning procedures were separated and the students did not have the opportunity for their assessment to inform their work. Students who successfully adopted the appropriate subject positions were most likely to succeed. The lack of interrogation of personal response on the part of the teachers had the effect of naturalising and universalising the student responses, their subject positions and their views of reality. The power relations which existed in the classroom were not questioned and educational knowledge was not available to the students (Kramer-Dahl, 1993). The explicit and the implicit discourses of the teachers and the learned responses of the students combined into a gendered discourse where the students practiced gendered discourses and the teachers endorsed and maintained these practices.

Both teachers revealed a knowledge of and a commitment to a Critical Literacy Discourse which has many advantages for empowering students to question the power structures of which they are a part. Yet the teachers were suspicious about the extent of the advantages that might accrue. The teachers recognised that while a critical pedagogical discourse could be empowering, they were not certain how such empowerment would take place or what it might mean. They had difficulty in conceiving the pedagogical practices which might empower the students yet not detract from the pleasure of the text. They tended to see a critical literacy as another set of practices which could be as explicitly authoritarian or dogmatic as previous pedagogies which they had rejected. They nevertheless recognised the importance for students of understanding how texts and speaking subjects construct and are constructed by social and cultural life, that it is important to disrupt and subvert the power structures involved in the process of maintaining inequitable positions. Further, they acknowledged the difficulty of achieving a significant shift in their pedagogies as both the students and themselves were embedded in a way of reading narrative texts that excluded the possibility of a major disruption. Whenever they attempted to shift into a critical pedagogical mode the attempt failed and the discourse slipped back into one of uninterrogated Personal Response, the Discourse they were most comfortable with. The students, especially the 'good' readers, have so well learned the freedom of the individual personal response that they are hard to shift, especially as the teachers themselves

are also embedded in this discourse. Entrenched patterns of reproduction are always difficult to shift (Bernstein, 1977).

The teachers found the aims of Critical Literacy appealing, convincing and worthwhile, if elusive. A Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse which questions the privileging of certain texts in the classroom, challenges notions of literary canons and asks crucial questions about the production of texts was acknowledged as important by both teachers. The questions made available from this position focus on how interpretation occurs, what meanings are privileged and which are excluded, and whose interests are central (Threadgold, 1989:109). Both teachers endorsed the importance of such a discourse but acknowledged the problems associated with achieving its aims in the classrooms.

6.8 Critical Literacy Discourses

There are difficulties with current articulations of critical literacy. As a discourse of self and social empowerment, it emphasises the individualism which is central to the liberal humanist tradition which supports class and gendered privilege. A patriarchal order which supports liberal humanism is a masculinist position, and it is this position which needs to be critiqued if an emancipatory is to work for everyone (Luke, 1993). In the main, masculinist critical literacy leaves gender uninterrogated. Under liberal humanism, critique and action are conceptualised for the powerful and not for the marginalised. 'A rewriting of the masculine public subject needs to take place' (Luke, 1993:32) if women are not to be doubly inscribed as masculine in the public and marginalised and invisible in the private.

An important question to ask is whether a language of critique which sets out to 'demystify and politicise the discursive construction of meaning students (and teachers) use to articulate their own experiences, and as well to analyse those institutional discourses applied to and against them' (Luke, 1993:35) is sufficient to transform material conditions which marginalise and oppress. Is the language of critique enough to give students access to transformative agency?

A Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse can open spaces for students if it provides a language of critical thinking, a language which enables them to deconstruct, if only partially, their own subjectivities and subject positions. Yet, according to Luke (1993), it is important for any language of critique to have legitimacy beyond the classroom. Teachers can encourage critical classroom debate in a context which legitimates personal voice. The language of critique is not necessarily personal. This causes a tension between the so called legitimate student voice and the language of critique. There are difficulties with the encouragement of students to reveal the personal for the scrutiny of those who have power over them. A further difficulty which has been identified by Luke

(1993) and supported by the teachers in this research is that the personal disclosures are seen to be authentic and unavailable for interrogation and critique regardless of the discourses of race, class and gender, which might inform subject positions. The privileging of personal experience over critique denies 'its situatedness in discourses that constitute subjectivities' (Luke, 1993:37). The emphasis on the personal, which is central to critical literacy, links with the privileging of personal response in the teaching of narrative texts at the expense of a consideration of the discursive contexts in which such personal response is encouraged.

Little will change for individuals unless the power structures are challenged as well as those of the classroom. Both teachers and students are implicated in the discursive networks of the classroom and located within institutionalised gender and power relations (Luke, 1993:37). It is these discursive contexts which need to be examined through a critical literacy of both critique and agency.

Equal opportunity to speak in the classroom, like equal representation in imagery and language in curricular text, will do little to challenge the outer limits of the epistemological horizon where the masculinist logic of the universal subject and its naming of the other is firmly inscribed (Luke, 1993:37).

Luke (1993) suggests a critical literacy which recognises multiplicity and difference while affirming values which are placed in historical, political and cultural contexts.

6.9 Disrupting the Discourses

In order to make narrative texts available for interrogation in a critical pedagogical sense, it is not enough to offer narrative texts which provide alternative positions for girls and women, although this is very important. It is important to take into account how the readers are reading the texts and to help them find alternative readings and more powerful positions. In order to read, the reader uses a knowledge of the world, uses a cultural repertoire to make sense of the reading. The reader 'needs to share a knowledge of the world, a cultural repertoire with the text in order to take that text on board' (Sarland, 1991:94). Readers might reject a text because they cannot do these things. The boys might reject a romance text because it has little correspondence with their reality, whereas for the girls the romance is the story which represents reality, a reality in which they willingly enrol. Even when a text is open to multiple and oppositional readings the reading 'will depend as much on the ideology of the reader as that of the writer (in so far as that can be known)' (Sarland, 1991:96).

For girls it is cultural consciousness which is crucial in helping them to examine the textuality of the romance and resist the powerfully naturalised and desirable world that the romance offers (Gilbert, 1990:186). The seemingly innocent discourses must be unpicked and opened out for and with the students. Then the ideology can be examined.

It is imperative that students learn to become 'resisting readers' and 'resisting writers'. Rather than entering into the text as the reader response theorists would ask students to do, so that the world of the book and the world of the student become one, it is far more productive for students to engage with the textuality of the book, to unravel the many strands in the work and resist that apparent seamless coherence that the work expects (Gilbert, 1990:185).

To reveal how romance texts and other popular cultural texts position men and women differently is, hopefully, to reveal to students that although the positions might appear attractive, they are inequitable and restricting to both women and men. Girls learn to see agency in terms of the private rather than the public (Rogers Cherland, 1994:177). Girls 'come to regard the outside world as threatening, in contrast to the boys ... who find it challenging' (Sarland, 1991:55). The world of the romance offers safety and power for the girls. Girls read and write stories in which they are marginalised or in which they marginalise themselves, while the boys position themselves strongly in their writing and read books where the men have centrality and agency.

Girls tended to write more reflective descriptions of events and to marginalise themselves in their own storylines. By contrast, boys typically assumed centrality and agency in their writing as they positioned themselves as protagonists (Alloway, 1995:96).

For students to realise how they position themselves both towards the text and to the world would help to de-stabilise the apparent coherence and naturalness of the positioning. While the boys are positioned in control, the girls much more willingly take up positions of sensitivity and engagement. A few of the girls are also willing to engage in conflict in the classroom with the boys in the reading of narrative texts.

The creation of the girls' identity is largely framed by discursive practices aimed at regulating conflict and rebellion (Rogers Cherland, 1994:188).

For many girls the desire created by the romance controls and regulates their behaviour. In the act of reflection the girls affirm the hegemonic position of the boys. It occurs in the romance and it also occurs in other popular cultural texts including video games.

The dominant form of masculinity constructed through video games for boys is based in violent domination and control, disregard for all other life forms, and ultimate self-aggrandisement through individual conquest (Alloway, 1995:82).

Hegemonic masculinity, as it is reproduced in popular cultural texts, treats boys as sexual agents while girls are treated as sexual victims. This ideology of the victim and the oppressor is reflected in materials used in schools and in the fiction that is read by children (Fine, 1988). It is these textual practices which need to be unravelled in order to empower girls.

For both girls and boys the examination of the construction of the texts in which they are implicated has the potential for opening new spaces for the students to take up. In the classroom the texts which operate are mostly invisible

... the historic and culture specific techniques and texts of the social institution of the school constitute the act and the practice of narrating (Luke, 1993:147).

Classroom talk constructs story as a language game 'with definitive and appropriate cultural logic' (Luke, 1993:147). But it is a logic which is largely invisible to both students and teachers. Its invisibility does not detract from its power. The stories are so entrenched in the power which operates in the construction and reproduction of the narratives that they are rarely questioned. In the interaction of the classroom discourse and the texts read in the classroom the inequities are maintained, '... the rationale and site for building a text are both invisible and non-negotiable' (Luke, 1993:150). To unravel the strands of the narratives operating would go a long way to unravelling the other powerful discourses, including the pedagogical purposes of the teachers, which are operating in the English classroom.

6.10 A Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement

Pedagogy is concerned with the construction of knowledge. An alternative pedagogy of estrangement is about making strange to enable a critical distance for readers. The already known but taken for granted is made visible so that all may be freed to explore the possibilities of constructing new or different knowledges. There has been a reluctance in the teaching profession to interrogate beliefs and values and to subject the pedagogies in which teachers and students are currently embedded to critical scrutiny. Teachers are not always consciously aware of their own pedagogy because what has become privileged is practice. Once practice is

privileged then it is difficult to reflect on pedagogical issues, the focus is on the practice. In contemporary educational practice in schools there is much resistance to discussions of pedagogy. (The two teachers in this research are exceptions to such teacher resistance. They willingly participated in the analysis of the transcripts, the development of the discourses, the co-authoring of this chapter and they attempted to use alternative pedagogies after the data was collected.)

In the absence of a pedagogical position and the ability to critically reflect on it, then nothing is ever questioned beyond the level of practice. This is an alternative discourse which seeks to address some of the discursive gaps of a Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse.

6.11 Conclusion

This chapter, as part of the grounded theory approach used, has examined how dominant pedagogical discourses have informed the teaching practices of two teachers. What was evident from both the coding processes, the interviews and the discussions is that while the teachers are able to make explicit the range of models available to them, in the main they operate in a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse which has consequences for what it is that the students learn. This discourse, which involves the encouragement of the students to reveal their thoughts, feelings, experiences and opinions, potentially threatens the authority of the teacher and at the same time opens the students up to the scrutiny of both the teacher and their peers. Within the regulatory practices of the classroom, students who are willing to express their thoughts and feelings are open to scrutiny and surveillance in a way that can be ultimately disempowering. A Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse involves 'a greater measure of personal risk, for student and teacher alike' (Green, 1986:6). A tension emerged between the overt methods of control used by the teachers and their encouragement of freedom of response, which assumes a value-free context. Because both girls and boys are left to operate in the discourses of response that they have already acquired, they reproduce gendered readings. Both students and teachers are limited by the pedagogical discourses which are available and operate in the classroom. Through the processes of negotiation and self-reflexivity the teachers were able to co-author this chapter with the researcher. A discourse of Critical Literacy, a Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement, which allows for a range of alternative subject positions and the possibility of agency, can open spaces not currently available for both teachers and students and was recognised by the teachers and the researchers as potentially transformative. This alternative pedagogy is explored in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: Moving Towards a Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement

Introduction

Teacher	What does Josephine look like?
Boy 1	A chickie babe. It's the girl on the front cover.
Girl 1	It can't be the girl on the cover. This one has green eyes.
Girl 2	She is dark, brown eyes, olive skin, brown curly hair, she wears glasses.
Teacher	Is she the girl on the front cover?
Girl 3	You do not have green eyes if you are Italian.
Boy 1	I will feel really deceived if it is not the girl on the cover.

This extract from the transcripts illustrates what happens when the taken for granted reality of the students lived experience and the taken for granted mimetic reality of the narrative text are disrupted. This is an important moment in the movement towards the elaboration of an alternative pedagogy, one which makes strange those discursive constructions of narrative texts which see them as reflecting essentialist truths about what it is to be human. The boy, who is sure that the character, Josephine, in *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992) is the girl on the front cover of the book, has both the deceptive nature of representation and of assumed social realities, estranged and disrupted. One question from the teacher repositions him towards the text. The comments from the girls refer to textual information which point out difference. For him the relationship of an assumed reality and a narrative text is so blurred that a process of estrangement, which implies discomfort, works to reposition his interpretation of himself and his assumed reality.

This was a moment of great intensity for him. He was engaged in both the narrative text and the discussion and was incredulous when the status of the relationship of the photograph to the character in the narrative text was questioned. He moaned, 'I will feel really deceived if it is not the girl on the cover'. None of the girls articulated the belief of an assumed direct mimetic relationship between the narrative texts and reality. This episode is at the core of the central arguments of this thesis as it illustrates the gendered positioning in engagement with narrative

texts. It sees the male using the text to detect reality, to confirm positions towards the text and to the world and to resist questions or interpretations which do not accord with his own. It sees the female as empathetic towards the male, speculative towards the text and reflective about textual interpretations. The pedagogical questions reposition readers to the text and demonstrates the links between pedagogy and discursive positioning.

This thesis argues that the discursive positionings of students and teachers cannot be understood outside of the pedagogical discourses which frame classroom practices. It has demonstrated that pedagogical discourses of teachers, in this case varieties of a Personal Growth Pedagogical Discourse, constrain and control discursive positions open to students. In this study the students take up a limited set of gendered discourses in response to narrative texts and are constrained by the pedagogy.

This chapter works to locate the discursive practices identified in the previous chapters within an elaboration of an alternative pedagogy. It moves towards the elaboration of an emancipatory pedagogy to disrupt essentialist categories which re-inforce binary oppositional terms and open up counter-hegemonic spaces for both teachers and students. This pedagogy, in its advocacy of the acceptance of difference and assertion of multiplicity, addresses the relationships of teachers, pedagogy, students and narrative texts and is concerned with renegotiating those relationships in order to transform the lived relationships of teachers and students in the English classroom. The chapter reviews the discourses reproduced in one English classroom in terms of gendered subject production through pedagogical practices which are identified in this research. The chapter also reviews the ways in which gendered positions are set up and reproduced through pedagogical discourses in one site.

The thesis suggests that from the analysis, the discursive reconstructions of a number of texts and the interrogation of the data, there are two dominant overarching discursive positions, one in which the boys prefer to be located and one in which the girls prefer to be located. It does not suggest that these positions are uncomplicated, nor that they are only available to either gender, rather it suggests that because the power structures of the class and the dominant views of femininity and masculinity which are unmediated by pedagogy, girls and boys prefer to be located within the feminised and masculinised discursive positions available.

This thesis has problematised the binary, masculine/feminine, to complexify it, to reconfigure it, to oppose it and to find ways of disrupting it. The aim of this thesis has been to deconstruct the initial binary, masculine/feminine, and to reconstruct it to reveal the complexities in ways not obvious in the initial binary. It has been to read against the text, to deconstruct it, to question the assumptions which shape it. It has not been to destroy, rather it has been to examine 'the limits of what we

think we cannot think without, our most cherished assumptions' (Lather, 1991b:5). The interrogation of the complexities, through the production of complex discourses, is to show the power and stability of the initial binary, the power relations within it and its capacity to close down alternative possibilities. The initial binary, masculine/feminine, has been contested from within, to work against it, disrupting it, yet recognising that a binary system informs all discourses.

7.1 Binary Oppositions

7.1.1 Dominant Discourses

From the beginning of the research, the binary opposition of gender was central to the methodological and theoretical approaches. The masculine/feminine binary, is elaborated in terms of the discourses produced and reproduced, recognising the complexity and contradictoriness that exist within them. The thesis argues that the constitution of complex gender regimes in an English classroom are produced and reproduced through the dominant pedagogy operating. Through the interaction of narrative texts, pedagogical discourses and existing gendered subject positions, the research demonstrates how the pedagogical discourses produce and position students in complex, gendered ways.

The discourses of the students are listed as a set of binary oppositions in a way similar to that of Lee (1996:206-207) from Cixous (1981) and Lloyd (1984).

detection/speculation

confirmation/reflection

resistance/empathy

The students take up the discursive positions because they are available within the pedagogical discourses operating in the classroom. This suggests that pedagogy determines gendered positions in some direct senses. These discursive positions are organised around the strong binary distinction masculine/feminine. The gender relation is one of masculine apprehension of the world, after Lee's 'masculine subject' (1996:206) knowing and feminine insertion in some of the senses of Lee's 'feminised world object' (1996:206). The discursively produced binary positions are those constructed through the examination of methodology and theory in previous chapters. The binary pairs demonstrate relations of gender and power which suggest issues for a theory of gender, pedagogy and texts in ways which question and do not reproduce the binaries.

7.1.2 Detection/Speculation

The first two binaries, detection/speculation, like the other binaries, show the gendering processes at work. The students take up different positions to narrative texts which can be understood in terms of this binary. Most of the boys in this research seek for surface features of narrative texts and look for facts. It is not that the girls cannot respond in this way, it is that they choose to locate themselves differently. The boys' oral demonstration of the detection discourse is recognised by the teachers as competence. Whatever the boys do is constructed by many teachers as better than what it is that girls do (Walkerdine, 1990b:127). In this binary, for instance, the attention of the boys to surface facts in narrative texts is endorsed as least as much as the speculative attempts of the girls which are often regarded as weaker, less focused and more uncertain than those of the boys. Most of the boys locate themselves on the surface of the narrative text whereas most of the girls prefer to operate in-depth, below the surface of the narrative. The surface facts of the narrative texts are contextualised by the real life experience of the boys and not within the text. The internal coherence of the text is not an issue for boys operating within this discourse. For the girls, the world of the narrative text is important. In the discourse of speculation they can hold at least two worlds, speculating that the world of narrative texts exists outside and other than what might be a real life experience for them. This discourse is a less powerful position for the girls because it relocates them in positions which values multiplicity and diversity. It is similar to Lee's fact/value binary (1996:206).

7.1.3 Confirmation/Reflection

The second binary is confirmation/reflection. The boys take up a strong position to the narrative text in the discourse of confirmation. They use the facts to confirm their view of the world. This fits with the 'instrumental' view suggested by Lee (1996:207). The discourse of reflection is much more 'relational' (Lee, 1996:307). Facts, for many of the girls, are much more relational and open to contestation. Where confirmation seeks closure and singularity of meaning, it rapidly includes and excludes what will be accepted or not as confirmation of a world view. The discourse of confirmation is aimed at including only that which affirms a particular world view. In the discourse of reflection the girls use narrative texts to construct world views. The confirmation discourse is external to the text, whereas the discourse of reflection is about constructing open and changing meaning and is internal to the text.

7.1.4 Resistance/Empathy

The third binary is resistance/empathy. The boys detect the facts, confirm them and take up a position of resistance to contradict positions that they find unacceptable. The girls, because of their discourses of speculation and reflection, are open to a position of empathy. The discourses of detection and confirmation fix the boys more rigidly to the text and to the world, especially in terms of

hegemonic masculinity. In the discourse of resistance the boys refuse to accept readings of the text that do not confirm their reading of the text and the world. They are resistant readers in the sense of Kress (1989) and Cranny-Francis (1994). They resist the text itself, they dismiss it if it does not represent their world view. Their resistant readings are often a refusal to engage. The discourse of resistance often ends with a position external to the text. This position confers on boys power in the classroom and power to act upon the world. It does not open to them the possibility of multiple discourses which might be valid or the possibility of multiple positionings which might open spaces for alternative agency.

For the girls, the discourse of empathy enables them to relocate themselves in alternative positions from which they can be empathetic even if they reject the position offered. This discourse does not have a singular position in which power is located. It is multiple, not single and it is about understanding and accepting multiple positions. It is relational and non-linear (Lee, 1996:207). It includes the notion of complexity and ambiguity. For girls who locate themselves in this discourse they accept a position of less power. This is a discourse of inclusion as opposed to a discourse of exclusion. Like Lee's speech/silence binary (1996:206), the discourse of resistance places boys, who take it up, in a powerful position to speak, a position which silences the girls who take up the oppositional position of empathy, placing them in empathetic silence with the position of resistance.

7.2. Apprehension and Insertion

7.2.1 Inside/Outside

The three discourses used by the boys and the girls reveal their mutuality and interconnections. Detection, confirmation and resistance show ways of looking at the world which have processes in common. They are exterior, surface, powerful, combining the already known with the new, affirming what is known and resisting that which is not easily recognisable. Reflection, empathy and speculation are likewise closely interconnected. They are interior, reflective, tentative, passive and emphasise the importance of feeling. These two sets of discourses reproduce the public/private, inside/outside binaries. This thesis has explored how the role of various institutional practices, especially the pedagogical discourses of the teachers, are implicated in the formation of gendered subjectivities and their relationship to narrative texts around an inside/outside, public/private binary. These oppositional discourses see girls and boys as two disparate groups who are disadvantaged in different but related ways within a specific institutional structure. The positioning of girls and boys within the pedagogical practices of an English classroom has different effects and consequences for girls and boys (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1994). Students are positioned to produce different discourses which exacerbate already existing inequalities for girls (Martino, 1994a). It is acknowledged that particular subjects have become feminised and masculinised in the structuring of the curriculum around the public/private binary and that the

consequent devaluing of the subject English as a feminised subject has an influence on the boys' positioning to narrative texts valued in the English classroom (MacDonald, 1980).

In seeking to find the binaries which capture the discursive positioning in this English classroom, a metabinary pair has been identified to demonstrate the oppositional and gendered responses of the students. These oppositional discourses are named 'apprehension' and 'insertion'.

7.2.2 Discourse of Apprehension

The word 'apprehension' is ambiguous and appealing, capturing the active acts used in implying might and right, a process of viewing the world from the outside, seeing the world as fixed and able to be recognised and comprehended with almost immediate closure. The alternative meaning of apprehension, which is about hesitancy and fear, captures the fragility within which male hegemony is constructed in that boys work hard to maintain an appropriate masculinity and are fearful of its imminent shattering (Connell, 1989, 1995). There is something about the intensity with which the boys hold their positions that suggests their vulnerability. Many of the boys reveal that response to narrative texts requires them to reveal emotions which are not considered by them to be appropriate masculine behaviour. The construction of masculinity and the discursive positioning of the boys indicates how subjectivity is implicated in subject learning. They see masculinity in terms of a specific set of traits such as a capacity for strength, rational thought, sexuality and power. This version of masculinity is in opposition to what it is to be feminine, it is not to feel or to need.

A deeply ingrained aspect of this version of this form of masculinity can be a contempt for women or those attributes constructed to be feminine. Women are defined as inferior and in opposition. Men are constructed as the competitors, against themselves and against women. The competitive curriculum of the school endorses a view of competition which is to the detriment of many boys. Boys who learn to compete, who are resistant to authority and to others, learn that to show emotion is not an acceptable part of the discourse of masculinity. What they do not recognise is that this discourse functions to maintain the power structures. To inflict pain on others and to not be affected by it works in the interest of the existing patriarchal order but it is limiting to those who take up that discursive positioning.

The boys, while sometimes inserting themselves into the text, are much more concerned with apprehension; firstly, with the text and the story, and secondly, via the text, the world. This behaviour involves knowing the world, fixing it and acting upon it in ways that may potentially change it. They are concerned with facts and with right/wrong answers, a position which confirms a masculine model of rationality and superiority. Fact-finding is often equated with superior

performance by teachers who confirm a narrow definition of school success. For the boys this appears to be a position of power and resistance. Some of the resistance can be seen in terms of a response to perceived failure and a means of achieving an alternative status which is in opposition to anything which the boys consider as feminine. Boys demonstrate the need to compete with each other, to assert their masculinity and to deride those boys who position themselves differently.

Most boys do not want to question or make visible masculine constructions of gender because they do not want to acknowledge that assumptions about masculinity contribute to inequitable positions for boys and girls or that these assumptions might cause them problems. They resist interrogations of homophobia because the fear of being labelled gay puts great pressure on males to prove their heterosexual credentials by conforming to a narrow range of masculine expectations. Overt homophobia works to silence those, male and female, who are not prepared because of the consequences, to position themselves as other. This is a particularly oppressive version of masculinity as it is one which involves violence, competition and sexual virility at the expense of expressing emotions and valuing intimacy (Martino, 1994a,b).

7.2.3 Discourse of Insertion

Girls are much more likely to insert themselves into the text. The process of insertion involves identification with plot, character and world as if they are real and as if they, the reader, are part of the story. Girls investigate the world of the text and the real world from the inside, they can speculate about alternative possibilities and accept multiplicity and diversity. Their subjectivity is inside the story. While they accept the possibility and the necessity of change, they do not see themselves as acting upon the world easily. This thesis argues that this act of maintaining the narrative, especially that of the romance, is endorsed by girls. Such reproduction of femininity endorses discourses which locate girls in discursive positions of learned helplessness. Dominant forms of masculinity serve to limit ways in which girls can behave and understand themselves. Girls often do not want to engage with issues of gender formation because they are positioned as victims, or the problem, and they do not want to acknowledge this position.

Insertion includes much interaction with the text. Most of the girls are very good at apprehension but are much more willing to move on to less literal readings. They immerse themselves in the text; they participate both in the reading and in the discussions with a willingness that the boys do not show. Their responses show flexibility and mobility towards the texts. Their responses include explorations of readings, the acceptance that more than one meaning is possible. They elaborate and speculate far more readily and frequently than boys. They are more concerned with generating their own meanings than are the boys. Perhaps the boys see themselves as powerful, but when their position is questioned boys resist

new meanings. The discursive positioning of the girls indicates that it is in opposition to that of the boys. The girls reveal their preference for nurturance, caring, understanding, emotionality and receptivity to the needs of others. The empathy and understanding which is demonstrated by the girls does not necessarily position them as successful learners. Their apparent compliance can mask a failure to succeed as learners, can disrupt the learning of girls and can marginalise them as valued participants in the learning process. In this study, if a girl demonstrates any of the characteristics which are considered as masculine – independence, overt resistance or assertive intelligence – then her femininity is open to question by the boys in the class, by some of the girls and many of the teachers in the school, although not the teachers who participated in this study. For instance, two girls in this class frequently challenged the boys' responses. They were sworn at by the boys, called names like 'dogs' and told to 'shut up'. Many of the other teachers in the school expressed their contempt for the two girls and apologised to the researcher for their presence in the class. So their assertiveness, independence and resistance worked against them in a way that it did not for the boys. The position which the boys take up is the most powerful. For boys and girls the meanings they make which are taken as the reflection of an objective reality are both different and gendered.

7.2.4 Processes of Insertion and Apprehension

The discourses of insertion and apprehension are understood as processes which are brought into play according to context and they are not seen as fixed. It is through different pedagogical practices that students can be offered a range of alternative positions.

In a Cultural Heritage and Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse the discourses in which the girls are embedded are often interpreted as suggesting that the girls are better readers, who use a wider and more flexible range of discourses to respond to fictional texts. Yet while girls demonstrate the capacity to be good students of school literature, the discourses they acquire and prefer do not fit them well for success in the world of work. Narrative, if uninterrogated, can act as a powerful means of coercion which fixes individuals into particular subject positions. Being a good girl reader, rather than leading to empowerment, actually leads to the greater manipulation and coercion of the girls. They readily insert themselves into the possible worlds of the texts and embrace the textual ideologies by which they are seduced.

7.3 Pedagogy and Discursive Positioning

7.3.1 Feminised and Masculinised Pedagogies

While the subject of transmission pedagogies such as Cultural Heritage might be a masculinised one (Lee, 1996:208), so too the subject of a Personal Response pedagogy is a masculinised one, in that the dominant, the resistant, takes up most of the space in the current English classroom. In the Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse the feminine position is the compliant one (Lee, 1996:209). A pedagogy which endorses personal response at the expense of a critical reading can leave the readers at the mercy of the ideology of the text and maintain the gender ideology which confirms the power of the boys and effectively disempowers the girls. Critical Literacy has the potential to offer methods of deconstruction which potentially lead to an opening of spaces for both boys and girls. Critical Literacy, as a pedagogy, focuses on a critique of texts and their social and political implications but does not critique the power relations which exist in the classroom. Teachers' resistance to change, especially to the pedagogy implied in a Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse, reproduces a masculinist hegemony which is ultimately disempowering for the subject. However, for the teachers in this research, the negotiation, collaboration and engagement with theory and research lead to both a re-examination of the pedagogical practices which influence the reading positions available in the classroom and the suggestion of possibilities of alternative pedagogical practices, practices which not only offer alternative spaces for repositioning but the opportunity for agency and moves towards a liberatory pedagogy.

The naming of the pedagogy, especially the use of the word 'estrangement', caused some disquiet and debate among the teachers and the researcher. The teachers were not as attracted to the word as was the researcher. They saw the word 'estrangement' at first as negative, that it implied separation and alienation. Their tension over its use was both emotional and intellectual in that they wanted a positive, supportive, informative and clarifying word, while the researcher liked the ambiguity, the disruption, the discomfort and the disagreement provoked by the word. The naming of the pedagogy was left for further reflection and alternative suggestions. Finally, it worked on the teachers so that they agreed, in the absence of a better suggestion, that the ambiguity and disruption was appropriate for the intentions of the pedagogy.

7.4 An Alternative Pedagogy

7.4.1 A Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement

A Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement aims to encourage sharper understandings of masculinity and femininity, especially as they impact on the teaching of narrative texts in the classroom. It works through pedagogical positioning rather than

providing a set of teaching practices. Current discourses of masculinity and femininity do not advantage either boys or girls in their engagement with narrative texts. Existing pedagogies do not take sufficient account of the gendered construction of the students, have not attempted to engage with the gendered subjectivities that students bring with them nor have they sufficiently critically reflected on the ways in which pedagogy conflicts with social constructions of gender.

A Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement, one which makes visible to both teachers and students how power operates to privilege certain kinds of texts, both those produced and those consumed, is empowering. One of the aims of such a pedagogy is to examine the binaries that currently exist in the teaching of English and attempt to reconfigure them. To break the power of the binaries is to locate the excluded middle between the polar opposites, allowing proliferation of discursive possibilities and subject positions. Currently, many teachers and students accept hegemonic or dominant meanings without question. For example, in accepting that narrative texts are mimetic, reproducing a world that is assumed to be real, both students and teachers reproduce hegemonic meanings of texts. The unequal relations reproduced in a romance text like *Looking for Alibrandi* (Marchetta, 1992) are accepted as real and 'true' and the way things are. These dominant meanings freely circulate in ways which exclude the individual subject from the generation of counter-hegemonic meaning. A Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse, such as the one which was dominant in the classroom, reproduces the meanings that the students bring with them from engagement with popular culture. Many of the students in this research saw the popular cultural texts they read as real, 'mimetic', so that the boy who saw the photograph on the front cover of *Looking for Alibrandi* as the character, Josephine, did not make a distinction between texts as constructions of reality and texts as 'real'. He did not want to read the text if his idea was threatened. In a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse such a meaning might not be questioned unless by one of the other students.

The invisibility of how meanings are constructed, both in texts and through pedagogical practices, means that both teachers and students can easily accept them uncritically and do not interrogate them. They are so embedded in hegemonic meanings that sometimes it is difficult for the individual subject to know what is meant and how those meanings have been generated from already available meanings in the culture. Uninterrogated responses to hegemonic masculinity, as represented in the three narrative texts used, leaves this version of masculinity intact, does not question it. If interrogated as part of a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse, the students, mostly male, are surprised and reject alternative views. What an alternative pedagogy, one with a critical perspective offers, is a new set of discourses, a politicised frame on pedagogy to help teachers reflect on current pedagogical practices in the teaching of English to ask what it is that the students are learning, what are the purposes of the learning and how the learning informs subjectivity. The aim of such critical reflection is to be liberatory in the sense of Lather (1991).

The discourses taken up by the majority of the boys are more likely to be associated with objectivity, rationality, denial of emotions and resistance, while the discourses more likely to be taken up by the girls are associated with emotions, acceptance of diversity and complicity. A Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement can make visible the constructedness of the discursive positions taken up by both boys and girls and can contribute to the remaking of subject English and the role of narrative texts in it, in order to resituate student subject and subject narrative texts within the resituated Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement. Using processes connected with a Critical Literacy Pedagogical discourse, a Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement asks questions which situate the students and teachers differently towards texts; it sees that texts can be read differently depending on the purposes for reading them and that meanings are multiple depending on the contexts in which they are made.

The process of estrangement can work to deconstruct personal writing and talk in order to reveal the constructed nature of all texts (Kamler et al., 1997:25). This process disrupts the Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse as teachers who are operating in this discourse are not achieving the aims of the discourse because the personal response is not personal, but constructed from publicly available discourses. There is a sense in which the responses of the students are formulaic and clichéd rather than personal, in ways that the students often do not realise. To ask students to deconstruct personal writing or talk and to dislodge a connection between language as a representation of a true self can be threatening but also liberating. Reading the personal as constructed in a Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement can question the sense of a true self, represented in so-called personal writing. To question the hegemony of the liberal humanist view of the subject is simultaneously liberating and confronting, yet the site of potential agency.

Processes of estrangement expose the complex ways cultural values are encoded in reading and writing and make them visible for discussion. Such processes recognise the difficulty of discarding the gendered discourses in which the students are embedded. For example, most of the students bring both gendered responses to the selection of narrative texts and gendered patterns of response learned through engagement with popular cultural texts and socially produced and accepted ways of talking about narrative texts. An empathetic response, which was the dominant response of the girls in this study, is very difficult to question and to shift. Processes of estrangement will be generative and produce alternative subject positionings for students, so that the girls might see that it is possible to see gender as discursively produced in a narrative text and limiting to women, while at the same time engaging empathically with the characters.

7.4.2 Teachers and Explicit Meaning

In a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse teachers' meanings are often not articulated to the students because either they do not know what they are or they are deliberately withheld in the belief that this frees the students to make their own meanings. A Cultural Heritage Pedagogical Discourse assumes values which are too difficult to articulate to the students, who have to be so embedded in the discourse that the values and assumptions are self-evident. To withhold explicit meanings and purposes from the students is also to maintain power over them. In a Critical Literacy Pedagogical Discourse many teachers believe that there are certain issues which cannot be discussed with students. This prohibits teachers from openly engaging in discussions of power with the students as this would hold the possibility of disruption. The hegemony of certain meanings is maintained by specific relations of power and disrupted by others. Critical Theory has not been used widely in English classrooms in Australia to inform literary pedagogy. A Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement contributes to linking the best of Critical Theory and Critical Literacy in transforming the lived relations of gender and power in the teaching of narrative texts. It recognises teacher and student partiality as the teacher and pedagogy are aspects of the complex relationships of the classroom which can be subjected to the processes of estrangement and subversion.

7.4.3 Reading Narrative Texts and Enjoyment

Such a pedagogy would not seek to destroy or threaten the enjoyment of narrative at the expense of analysis, it would endorse enjoyment of the text while at the same time questioning the ways in which texts can coerce. Any theory that excludes the subject's desires and emotions, which both need theorisation and historical contextualisation, fails to take into account the centrality of desire in contemporary accounts of subjectivity (Pile & Thrift, 1995). In a Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement, one of the aims would be to relocate the text in the realm of desire and pleasure in different ways. Such a pedagogy would disrupt and estrange the emotional investment, shifting it but not displacing it. What has to be recognised is that 'emotions vary historically, cross-culturally and geographically' (Pile & Thrift, 1995). If emotions can be interrogated and invested with different meanings, then we can reinscribe ourselves in ways that liberate us from the constraints of the discourses in which we were previously embedded. This can lead to a constant interrogation of the discourses in which individual subjects are embedded in order to estrange and open them, making available more subject positions to be taken up. It is a recognition that every discourse has its limits and by moving into a new discourse, the discourse can be interrogated with the aim to move towards a proliferation of discourses rather than a closure of discourse. This process is infinite; there is never an end to the process nor a closure of meaning. For example, in this study six dominant discursive positions were produced which were taken up by the students in a gendered binary. To expose the discourses and submit them to the students for scrutiny, to discuss them for the power relations operating in them and creating spaces for students to widen the range of discursive

positions in which they are comfortable to work, is a beginning. The purpose is to create opportunities through which students might feel empowerment rather than reproducing 'correct' responses as part of a new pedagogical orthodoxy. The aim of such an alternative pedagogy is to have effect on the discursive positioning of the students both in the classroom and beyond it.

7.4.5 Reading, Self-Reflexivity and Agency

A Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement would be self-reflexive and action oriented. It would 'require of critical pedagogy theorists the application of the kind of self-reflexive awareness demanded of teachers, to deconstruct the ideology and radical theorising embodied in their own texts' (Luke, 1993:33). It would enable teachers to question their pedagogies in order to see how groups are marginalised on the basis of race, class and gender and investigate what is silenced currently in Critical Literacy pedagogy. Critical Literacy pedagogy 'ignores gender by a failure systematically to engage with specific feminist theoretical concerns' (Luke, 1993:33).

A Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement makes visible to both students and teachers the discourses in which they are embedded and provides them with deconstructive strategies to unpack those discourses. The teachers in this study were interested in, and energised but hesitant to use, an alternative pedagogical discourse, which makes strange, which renders visible and makes available for interrogation the agendas of teachers, texts and students. They were convinced of its importance but concerned about the consequences. Such a pedagogy would include an explicit teaching of a metalinguistic knowledge of the construction of texts and narrative devices which structure texts and enable the students to see how narrative structures operate. In the same way, an explicit knowledge of discourse, genre and written conventions can help students to deconstruct the texts they read and to write their own. Explicit knowledge about the range of discursive forms of writing is helpful to the students in constructing their own writing. Students are often asked to complete writing tasks without teachers making explicit the aspects of writing which are valued. An important starting point is the deconstruction of the texts that the students privilege, not to destroy the pleasure of the text but to question its potential coercion.

7.4.6 Narrative, Knowledge and Visibility of Pedagogy

In a Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement an understanding of narrative texts shows how texts construct ways of knowing and ways of organising knowledge that are endorsed by the culture. It demonstrates how narrative texts work, how texts are constructed and how they work to support the powerful ideologies of society. While individual interpretations appear diverse, they are actually culturally constrained (Patterson, 1989) so it is useful for students to investigate how responses are influenced by discourses currently operating and powerful. Acts of

reading are never truly individual. Readers use interpretative frames they have available, the interpretative strategies agreed upon by the cultural (Kramer-Dahl, 1993:110). In order to question or disrupt these interpretations, the interpretations themselves need to be made available for interrogation. The process of estrangement will enable the personal response of the students and the invisible pedagogical strategies of the teachers available for public scrutiny.

While a Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement aims to make available for scrutiny all conventions of meaning-making, especially in narrative texts, it recognises the difficulties of doing this, given the partial and interim formulations of these and their locations within privilege and power. It supports analysis of narrative texts and sees that narrow prescribed versions of analysis do not achieve the critical awareness that is necessary for discursive repositioning and empowerment. Whatever method of textual analysis is used, and this thesis proposes that there should be a number, the method needs to be seen as discursively produced and open to the processes of estrangement. While explicitness and teacher intervention are important, there is a danger that a limited analytical frame may stop both teachers and students from asking the questions they want to ask. For example, if teachers make explicit a range of questions to be asked of a text, then such a process, while initially helpful, might restrict and confine; it will not provide a normative, free engagement with and evaluation of narrative texts unless the process is constantly open to question.

This thesis argues that it is not possible, nor even useful, to make explicit to learners all the linguistic, cultural, historical and gendered elements in any negotiation of meaning in text (Gee, 1990; Threadgold, 1989). Formal analysis of narrative texts makes little sense to many students until they have some idea of the purposes of different text types and reasons why one would want to analyse them (Freedman & Medway, 1994). The teachers in this research recognised there is not a simplistic choice between explicit teaching of textual features and free personal choice, the relationship is much more complex and context dependent. Both of these teachers erred on the side of the personal and evidence of explicit teaching is rare in the transcripts. While both of the teachers recognised that form and structure in narrative text is important if students are enabled to see the constructedness of texts, a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse did not allow them to pay much attention to form (Kress, 1995:80).

A Critical Pedagogy will problematise difference. In contrast to conceptions of a universal learner, this pedagogy makes visible difference, such as gender, a part of the process of understanding the complexities of student negotiations of subjectivity. For example, when some of the boys in this study refused to read the romance text because it was a 'girls' book' in which 'nothing happened', one of the girls objected, saying that the girls always had to read books that boys wanted to read so why should not the boys read a so-called 'girls' book'. This was a moment

of possible estrangement when issues of gender, narrative texts and pedagogy could have been opened to scrutiny explicitly by the teacher, but also by students.

A Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement argues that the implication for gender is that the discourses available in the classroom not only shape student interpretations of narrative texts but also provide interpretative frames for lived experience. To provide tools to analyse narrative texts is not enough. It is argued that analysis must be a simultaneous estranging of the movement between text and life. It is the teacher and the pedagogy who mediates the text and lived experience in the classroom. It is argued that the estrangement of the teacher from both pedagogy and narrative text is important in order to find new interpretative frames for both the students and themselves.

7.5 Summary/Conclusion

This thesis has argued that in order to address some of the inequities which exist in English classrooms and which inhibit the learning of both girls and boys, the effects and workings of dominant discourses of femininity and masculinity, especially in response to narrative texts, need to be examined in an attempt to move beyond an oppressive gender bind (Davies, 1989, 1993; Kenway & Modra, 1993).

It has demonstrated the relationship between pedagogy, gendered subjectivities in the reading of narrative texts. In examining this complex relationship, the thesis has demonstrated how certain versions of pedagogy construct a gendered view of the world and position students to limited versions of gender in their interaction with narrative texts. It has explicitly examined how pedagogy can position students in an oppositional gendered binary which is oppressive to both females and males. It has made visible how pedagogy locates students to make gendered readings of narrative texts, even in advance of an actual reading. It has shown how a particular narrative text, and how it potentially positions readers in gendered ways, does not matter within a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse because the pedagogy positions students to read in gendered ways regardless of the text. On the other hand, this thesis has shown that the particular narrative text does matter because most narrative texts reaffirm the gendered positions endorsed by a Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse, as well as provide differing potentials for their articulation. The dynamics of this complex relationship reproduce narrow and oppressive versions of femininity and masculinity.

This thesis has explored the complexity of the pedagogical practices through which certain versions of femininity and masculinity are produced and sustained. Such reproduction has implications for elaborating an alternative set of pedagogical practices which open spaces for the development of alternative versions of

femininity and masculinity not located within sets of oppositional binaries. It has suggested that an explicit pedagogy, a Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement, designed to make available to students critical skills and alternative ways of viewing knowledge and power not tied to the reproduction of oppressive gender binaries, can open liberatory possibilities for both students and teachers. This thesis has suggested that it is just as important now to interrogate current and powerful discourses of gender in order to make visible how they limit opportunities for both girls and boys and to open spaces for the rewriting of the possibilities of gender.

This thesis has demonstrated how subjectivity is habitually produced and reproduced in a limited range of discursive positions. The discourses and the ideologies they support are taken up as if they are personal and not social. This is particularly evident in the Personal Response Pedagogical Discourse, which was the dominant pedagogical discourse of the English classroom in which the research took place. The responses are limited discourses that are highly stylised, formalised and ritualised. These discourses are produced and reproduced as ritualised performances of subject positions. This thesis has demonstrated the social and cultural dimension of dominant discourses with the view to opening spaces for their interrogation and subversion.

This thesis, through discourse analysis of classroom transcripts supported by student writing and the researcher's journal produced in an English classroom, has sought ways of reconstructing pedagogy as a form of cultural politics in order to open up new emancipatory spaces for students and teachers. Such spaces offer the possibility to reconstruct subjectivity and confront issues of marginalisation and oppression. It has demonstrated the importance of shifting the discourses in which students and teachers are embedded in order to move towards alternative discourses which are able to critique and challenge current repressions.

Through such a cultural politics which engages with text, this thesis has sought to emphasise the need for emancipatory pedagogies and transformative practice. Through the development of a Critical Pedagogy of Estrangement it has sought to open discursive spaces. It has achieved this through a detailed examination of the discursive practices which operate in an English classroom with the intention to empower both students and teachers to take up a broader range of subject positions.

The multiplicity sought in this thesis is not random, unmotivated or neutral. Rather, it is situated within the context of active struggles for meaning. Further, it is situated within discourses which make the apprehension and articulation of choices and struggles possible and capable of conscious action. It has seen the combination of theory and action in terms of a praxis which allows for liberation and change.

This thesis has explored how difference is produced 'within a common and connected space' (Fuller, 1997:9) acknowledging that difference is not given or natural. The intention was not to essentialise difference but to show how difference is produced and reproduced through discourse. The domains interrogated are those of pedagogy, student response to narrative texts and gender. These domains are recognised as complex and contradictory. So while one site of oppression, that of gender, was investigated, it is an extremely complex site when linked with pedagogy and narrative texts. The thesis has examined how the discourses interrogated work to reproduce discourses which limit the subject, in this case, teachers and students in an English classroom.

The site investigated was that of one English classroom, a complex site of competing texts. It is the inclusion of all participants in the classroom interaction, the teacher, the students, the texts, the pedagogical practices and the researcher which makes the participants visible for interrogation in new ways. Such a position avoids the accusation of teacher bias in valuing those attributes that boys demonstrate over those which girls demonstrate. Moreover it demonstrates how teachers are positioned within regimes of power and are produced by wider social and institutional practices. New possibilities for change are opened in this examination, new possibilities for transformative practice which are not constrained when only one or two parts of the relationship are explored. The focus on femininity and masculinity as a binary system institutionalised through regimes of practice, particularly pedagogical practices, can open liberatory possibilities through critical interrogation for alternative sets of practices.

The readings of the classroom interactions have been constructed not as truth but as a social site of multiple possibilities. It is assumed that they are not fixed but multiple and shaped by power. The research has been constructed as a text in the same way that the discourses produced in the classroom are constructed. It reflects the researcher's position as a subject in discourse and is open to interrogation in the same way that the classroom discourses are. The deliberate use of the different voices, partial, contradictory and paradoxical, are recognised as located within the discourses and discursive practices within which each is constructed. Like other texts, this text is seen as continually open to contestation and revision, while it privileges one reading which focuses on certain understandings of gender formation.

The use of grounded theory to examine discursive production in this study has contributed to the analysis of discursive constitution and subjectivity. The analysis of discursive productions of teachers and students confirms the importance of examining the relationships of teachers, students and narrative texts and how these relationships work to deal with the complexities of discursive production and subjectivity. This analysis suggests that a range of theories is important in order to make visible the processes and power structures of dominant discourses. As Threadgold suggests, 'A whole range of theoretical fictions are

necessary, a whole range of different positions to let us see around the corners of our theories and stories in which we are entrenched ... ' (1997:133). Grounded theory used in engagement with other methods of critical analysis provides for more complex and dynamic notions of analysis.

This thesis demonstrates that effects and contradictions are the result of discursive positioning and not individual failure. This suggests the need to make visible the complexity of the discourses of the English classroom, teachers, students and texts. The performances of the discourses made visible are thus open to change and re-making and alternative discourses are made available. Gender, as one of the discursive positionings which constitute students and teachers differently, is central to the transformative project of this thesis. The readings of the multiple texts have suggested the intersubjectivity, intertextuality, interrelatedness and indivisibility of author/ reader/ text and knowledge/ knower/ known. In so doing, this thesis has identified and contested the boundaries that limit understandings of the possibilities for pedagogic positioning and educational transformation beyond those currently available and has suggested new lines of inquiry and pedagogic development.

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